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LOUIS XIV.

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OLD PARIS;

ITS COURT AND LITERARY SALONS.

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BY

Catherine Charlotte, Lady Jackson.

"C'est à la littérature qu'on doit l'éloignement des débauches grossières et la conservation d'un reste de la politesse. Cette littérature, utile dans toutes les conditions de la vie, console même des calamités publiques, en arrêtant sur des objets agréables l'esprit qui serait trop accablé de la contemplation des misères humaines."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ERRATA. VOL. II.

Page 15, line 3 : *for* "there," *read* thither.
Page 41, line 6, *and* page 44, line 10, *for* "St. Genévière," *read* Ste. Génévière.
Page 68, line 22, *and wherever the same error occurs, for* "chef-d'œuvres," *read* chefs-d'œuvre.
Page 75, line 22 . *for* "poste," *read* porte.
Page 92, line 5, *and elsewhere in names of persons, for* "St.," *read* Saint.
Page 118, line 8 : "was then," *omit* "then."
Page 122, line 16 : *omit* "tinge of."
Page 126, line 27 : "Il y à," *omit the accent.*
Page 161, line 4 : *for* "by," *read* from.
Page 211, line 4 : *for* "bien-seances," *read* bienséances.
Page 278, lines 23, 25 : *omit* "of," *and wherever same error occurs.*

OLD PARIS:

ITS COURT AND LITERARY SALONS.

CHAPTER I.

Exhaustion of the Finances.—Civil War.—Its Origin.—The Ministerial Grand Coup.—Consternation in Paris.—The Conseiller Broussel.—The Coadjuteur de Paris.—His Reckless Life and Popularity.—De Retz and Mazarin.—Attempts to Appease the People.—The Queen's ill-timed Mirth.—The Barricades.—Les Frondeurs.—Molé's Address to the Queen.—Henrietta, wife of Charles I.—Broussel's Return to Paris.—End of Act I. of the Fronde.—Modes, à la Fronde.—Goliath the Giant, and Mazarin.

THE finances of the state were at a very low ebb, and money was wanting to furnish supplies to the victorious armies, which, under the Great Condé and other valiant generals, were reaping laurels for France. Arrears of pay were also due to them, some portion of which it was desirable to defray.

The revenues of the kingdom, had it been customary to apply them to meet the expenses of government, would have amply sufficed for its requirements; but since the days of the great Sully, ministers, and *surintendants des finances*, had cast economy and probity to the winds, and made it their first duty to enrich themselves and their families. It was easy to invent new taxes, and so long as the people could struggle on under their burdens, of what account to those who inflicted them were the privations and sufferings of those who bore them? This naturally induced extreme irritation in the minds of the people, and in the parliament, and the result was the civil war of the Fronde; which was, in fact, but the reaction from that state of forced submissiveness to which the iron despotism of Richelieu had ground down the nation. Other feelings, other interests, that gave rise to some romantic, and many ridiculous incidents, became blended with the primary cause of the outbreak, and rendered nugatory that great popular political movement, which so long defied the authority of the government, and even threatened the court and the country with revolution.

Memoirs of the Fronde are numerous, and the chief incidents of that drama may be readily

gathered from them. But of the character, motives, and actions of those who figured most prominently in it, it is difficult to form from them an opinion; so opposed to each other are the various accounts (for the most part dictated by prejudice, partizanship, or in a spirit of ridicule) of those who took part in its stirring scenes, or were eye-witnesses of them. It would be foreign to the purpose of these pages to enter into any detailed account of the Fronde. But as the Fronde had its heroines, as well as its heroes, it cannot be passed over altogether unnoticed.

Mazarin, who was generally held in abhorrence, had excited public indignation by giving the important post of *surintendant des finances* to the Italian banker, Particelli Emeri; a man of mean birth and dissolute life, and who, enriched by plundering the state, lived in a style of reckless extravagance that gave considerable offence. His fertile brain invented many new and onerous taxes, and other oppressive measures for supplying the deficit in the revenue. When edicts were issued for authorizing these new imposts, the parliament opposed and declined to verify them. Other courts of justice were invited to unite with the parliament for

the purpose of reforming the state, and the proposal being willingly accepted, an "*Arrêt d'union*" was immediately decreed.

The differences between the parliament and the council of the regent continued for some time without any attempt at actual revolt. But the queen, astonished at the presumption of such "*canaille*," desired to give the parliament a lesson, and one so forcible that that assembly of mutinous spirits should thoroughly comprehend that "it was not for rebels to meddle with the concerns of government, and, under the semblance of seeking the public good, fill France with real in place of fancied misfortunes." The favourable opportunity the queen-regent and her ministry were longing for, was supposed to have arrived, when, some time after, the victory of Lens was announced. "Ah!" said the little king (then in his tenth year, and who, if he could not read, was well versed in all the gossip of the court), "how vexed the rebel parliament will be!"

When the colours taken from the Spaniards and imperialists were brought to Paris, a day was appointed for carrying them in procession to Notre Dame, and for the singing of a solemn Te Deum. The streets were lined with guards, of whom, when the thanksgiving for the victory

was concluded, Mazarin made use to effect his and the queen's *grand coup.* This was, to seize and convey to St. Germain the Conseiller Broussel, and, to Vincennes, Charton and Blancménil, the three most seditious and obstinate magistrates of the parliament, as they were considered by the court. "For the first quarter of an hour, consternation seemed to have paralyzed the inhabitants of Paris; the next, all was sadness and dejection. Even the children shared in the general *tristesse.*" Suddenly, however, as one recovered from the stunning effects of a blow, the people arise. All is movement, running to and fro, cries of rage, and shouts of "*à bas le Mazarin.*" The gay shops in the Rue St. Antoine are hastily closed. All business is at an end. Every good Parisian joins the throng in the streets, and adds his voice to those already calling aloud for the release of Broussel—an aged man, held in much veneration for his integrity and uprightness of character. The coadjuteur of Paris, Paul de Gondy—afterwards Cardinal de Retz—apprized of the *émeute,* appears on the scene, to calm the effervescence of the people. He bids them expect the speedy release of Broussel; he then hastens to join the queen-regent in council. He

finds every one there, he says, playing a part; "*et la reine, qui ne fut jamais plus aigre, contrefit la douce.*" She was laughing heartily at the account, which two of the courtiers were giving her, of the attempt of old Broussel's housekeeper to prevent the capture of her master, and afterwards, by her cries and lamentations, to incite the people to sedition. But these courtiers well knew, says De Retz, that "the farce, which so greatly amused her, was not unlikely to be followed, very soon, by a tragedy."

After some discussion on the subject, Mazarin asked the opinion of the council as to what course, under the circumstances, it would be best to pursue. "My advice," said one, "is to surrender the old rascal Broussel, either dead or alive." De Retz observed, in reply, that "the first would accord neither with the piety nor the prudence of the queen, but that the second might put an end to the tumult."

The queen, her colour heightened by anger, exclaimed, "I understand you, M. le Coadjuteur; you wish me to give Broussel his liberty. But," and she brought her pretty hands dangerously near to his face, "I will rather, with my own hands, strangle him, and all who——" She said no more. For Mazarin, dreading that

rage would overcome prudence, whispered a few words in her ear, which had the effect of checking her, and her face readily resumed its wonted calmness of expression. (Enforced reticence of her real feelings for twenty-seven years, had made of Anne of Austria a perfect actress.)

After some further conversation, the coadjuteur was commissioned to go forth and appease the people; promising them that if they dispersed, and quietude and order were restored, Broussel should be released the next day. The confusion had increased, for the mob was greater, and the pent-up hatred towards Mazarin found vent in terms of opprobrium, applied both to him and "*la dame* Anne." The appearance of their coadjuteur, dispensing blessings on all sides, and accompanied by the Maréchal de la Meilléraie at the head of a troop of cavalry, had on many a soothing effect; but the task he had undertaken was a difficult one, and twice his life was in danger from those who, in the heat of frenzy, did not, or would not, recognize him. Kind words, persuasion, some few menaces, and many promises, at last prevailed. The greater part of the mob dispersed, to await the fulfilment of the promise of Broussel's release.

The coadjuteur was a popular man. From

childhood he had been destined to succeed to the archbishopric of Paris, then filled by his uncle, and which had become a sort of heritage in the Gondy family. Sorely against his will he had entered the priesthood, and prospective ecclesiastical dignities could not overcome his extreme repugnance to it. He fought duels, he lived a reckless, dissolute life, hoping to be pronounced unfit for the Church. But all in vain; his escapades were unheeded, and after every combat he remained, as he says, "*avec un duel de plus et sa soutane.*" He believed that he was capable of playing a brilliant part in the world. But not being able to throw off the archbishopric, he applied himself more assiduously to study; trusting that opportunities might occur when, like Richelieu, La Valette, and other warrior-priests, who had not thought the sword and the crozier incompatible, his valour and his fitness to command would be proved.

He had become popular in Paris by securing the good opinion of a certain class of persons, who, though so straitened in means that pecuniary aid was acceptable to them, were disposed to suffer in secret rather than beg. A sum of twelve thousand crowns was disposed of among them in his name, by his aunt, who was

accustomed to say to the recipient of her bounty: "*Priez Dieu pour mon néveu; c'est lui de qui il lui a plu de se servir pour cette bonne œuvre.*"

These acts of private beneficence were considered to atone for a multitude of sins. They made him known, too, in his diocese, brought blessings upon him, and secured for him immense popularity. Persons of the most devout life and character, adopting the words applied to him by his preceptor, Vincent de Paul, said, "*S'il n'avait pas assez de piété, au moins, il n'était pas trop éloigné du royaume de Dieu.*"

Both in learning and mental endowments De Retz was greatly superior to Mazarin, and his friends even thought he might supplant the cardinal in the favour of the queen. Mazarin, though "*maigre à faire peur*," had the advantage in personal appearance; but Anne had once said, in reply to the remark of the Comtesse de Carignan, that the coadjuteur was an ugly man, "He has beautiful teeth, and no man who has a fine set of teeth can be called ugly." Tallemant also says, "*Il avait quelque chose de fier dans son visage.*" However, the coadjuteur, though he did venture to pay his court to her, and was rather graciously encouraged than repelled, was prevented by his attachment

to Mademoiselle de Chévreuse from following up the advantage he was supposed, erroneously probably, to have gained over Mazarin in the good graces of the queen.

On the occasion of the popular tumult he had been desired to appease, the coadjuteur, on returning to the Palais Royal to relate his partial success, was received by Anne and her council with an air of cold incredulity. It had been decided amongst them that the agitation of the people was as little to be feared as a mist that would vanish with the dawn of day. In a satirical tone, but with much smiling politeness, he was desired, by the queen, to seek the repose he must so greatly be in need of after his arduous task. A vast crowd awaited outside the Palais Royal the return of their coadjuteur. He was, as he tells us, "*ce qu'on appelle enragé*;" but again he harangued the populace—twice from the top of a carriage, and once mounted on a large stone—and again he succeeded in appeasing their anger, and averting, for a time, the threatened storm. But in his absence from the council, the cardinal and the coadjuteur's *friends* amused themselves by disparaging him. "Instead of calming the people," which they declared he had not done

and was powerless to do, "he had made vain attempts to induce a seditious revolt;" and so amusingly facetious were they in ridiculing the peculiarities of his gait, and airs of *beau cavalier*, which accorded so ill with his *soutane*, that Anne of Austria went almost into hysterics with laughter. Duly informed of what had passed, and stung to the quick by the ridicule of the queen, whom he had wished to serve; by the mocking compassion of Mazarin, whom he despised, the coadjuteur turned upon the court and declared that "before the evening of the next day he would be master of Paris."

Become *chef de parti*, Paris armed itself at his bidding. Women put weapons even into the hands of their children, and with that desperate enthusiasm so characteristic of their nation, armed themselves, also, and went forth to add fury to the fray. In the space of two hours two hundred barricades were constructed, on a plan founded on reminiscences of the barricades of the League. Gabions, or barrels, were filled with earth, and retained in their positions by aid of the heavy chains which, at that period, formed a sort of defence at night for the dark narrow streets of old Paris. On one side of the streets, they were fastened to the walls

by means of *bornes* or blocks of stone, and being stretched across them, were secured by massive locks on the other side. High narrow baskets, filled with sand and stones, stopped up the interstices and formed a sort of intrenchment. Before night near a thousand of these barricades were improvized by the people, who were told off in detachments to guard them.

The parliament assembled: and the minister having communicated with them, the President Coigneux, whose views were not unfavourable to the court, was in the act of recommending the assembly to deliberate on the message he had received, when his son, the well-known *bel esprit*, De Bachaumont, said jestingly to his colleague sitting next to him, "*Qu'il fronderai bien l'opinion de son père*," when it came to his turn to speak. There was a general laugh; the word found favour, and was repeated from one to another till it had gone the round of the assembly. "*Frondeur*." It struck them generally as an excellent term, and was at once unanimously adopted by those who intended to have their fling at the court.* On that famous

* The distinctive epithet so unexpectedly applied to the civil commotions of that period, no doubt, suggested itself to Bachaumont, from the circumstance of an edict having lately been

"day of barricades," 27th of August, 1648, the parliament, with their first president, Matthieu Molé, at their head, appeared at the Palais Royal to demand the release of Broussel and Blancménil. (Charton had not been taken.) The statement of Molé to the queen and her council was eloquent and forcible. If it sometimes shocked the ear, it took firm hold of the imagination; and all who heard it were much impressed by the moderation and justice of Molé's views, and the expediency of yielding to them. The single exception was the queen, who gave way to passion, "*Car connaissant peu elle ne craignait rien*," and Molé was dismissed with a refusal. Whilst he was speaking, little Louis, who sat beside his mother, and whose haughtiness and sense of his own greatness and authority were far in advance of his years, was agitated and restless; and proposed to her to command the presumptuous president to be silent, and to have him driven from her presence.

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issued prohibiting a set of youths from assembling in the moats under the walls of Paris, and attacking each other with the *fronde*, or sling and stones. Many accidents had happened from the practice, and in two or three cases death. Fines and imprisonment were therefore decreed to put a stop to it.

Queen Henrietta, wife of Charles I., was also present, but urged Anne to use gentleness rather than severity. The civil war then desolating England had driven her from her home; it threatened the stability of the crown—perhaps the life of her husband—and began, as she reminded the queen, in a similar opposition to parliament. The words of Henrietta prevailed with Anne far more than the oration of Molé, or the persuasions of the council, for a qualm of fear had passed through her mind. She liked the insipid routine of her indolent life to flow on undisturbed. The release of Broussel and his colleague was therefore ordered. And it was not too soon. Representatives of the trades and guilds had assembled, and threatened that if Broussel were not, within two hours, restored to them, a hundred thousand men would be prepared to demand his release in a different fashion, and that the queen and "le Mazarin" would have to go through "*un mauvais quart-d'heure.*" "*Race libertine!*" exclaimed the queen.

She, however, was thanked for *ordering* the release of the prisoners, but, at the same time, informed that the citizens of Paris would not lay down their arms until Broussel and

Blancménil were again among them. The next day Broussel returned to Paris or, rather, was carried there by the enthusiastic people. He was an old man of eighty, and was nearly killed, outright, by their suffocating embraces, and the excitement caused by the uproarious acclamations and frenzied joy of his fellow-citizens and friends. The barricades were destroyed, the shops were reopened, and "in less than two hours," says De Retz, "Paris was quieter than ever I saw it on a Good Friday." Henrietta desired to see the aged Broussel, and to converse with him, thinking she could persuade him to use his influence towards moderating the pretensions of the parliament. But speech with Broussel was not to be had, and the parliament were intent on getting rid of the cardinal.

They had proposed to put in force the decree of 1617, by which the Maréchal d'Ancre was dismissed from his post of minister. It prohibited all foreigners from interfering in the government of the kingdom and their appointment to any office in the state. The court immediately forbade all discussion upon it. The parliament threw it aside, and in its stead passed the singular law that made it punishable to apply to any one the epithet of "Maza-

riniste," as being the greatest insult that one man could offer to another. The Prince de Condé was then in Paris. Detesting Mazarin, he was on the point of declaring for the coadjuteur's party, when an arbitrary edict of the parliament made him hesitate. "*Le parlement,*" he said, "*va trop vîte. Je m'appelle Louis de Bourbon, et je ne veux pas ébranler la couronne.*" However, a declaration—dictated by the parliament and published in the name of the king—re-establishing several ancient ordinances that Richelieu had abolished, was accepted as a sort of peace. It was registered on the 24th of October, 1648. The next day the parliament adjourned; the queen, who had gone to Rueil, returned to Paris, and the first act of the Fronde was ended. In the second, new characters were to appear on the scene.

Throughout the trouble, suffering, and distress which this outbreak of popular feeling occasioned, there had been a constant succession of *jeux d'esprit,* pasquinades, farcical and satirical plays, *chansonnettes,* etc., publicly sung, recited, and played; printed, and distributed about Paris by thousands. Blot de Marigny and Paul Scarron were, principally, the authors of these

witty but scurrilous productions. The "Mazarinades" of "*le petit* Scarron" (a sobriquet first assumed by himself) highly diverted the people; but "*le doux cardinal*" never forgave them, and in after years the poor crippled humourist was, in consequence, refused a pension.

Fashion also took up the Fronde, and "*à la Montauron*" was wholly supplanted by it. Hats, fans, gloves, and kerchiefs were now *à la mode de la Fronde*. Dresses and long hanging sleeves were *frondées*, or slung *à la mode*, not looped. The *petits pains* and the knives and forks also followed the fashion. Even a savoury dish *à la Fronde* was concocted by old Broussel's clever cook, and the coadjuteur and his friends were so fortunate as to find an ingenious hatter, who devised a trimming for their hats that bore some resemblance to the popular sling, and had an immense success.

But popular as was that humble weapon of warfare, it proved less effective on this occasion than in the only other war in which we hear of it; that in which David, with a stone from a sling, slew the giant, and spread consternation in the ranks of the Philistines; for the parliament did not kill the cardinal or greatly terrify

the court. It may be, that the haughty Goliath bore himself too proudly, and had an overweening disdain for the champion of Israel and his *fronde;* while the supple Jules Mazarin—though he ventured to stand his ground—bowed his head when he saw the stone coming from the parliamentary sling. Twice, too, he ran away, then returned to the charge, and finally wearied out and disheartened his enemy; leaving him dispirited and humbled, with his face on the ground, he himself standing upright—not only with no stone in his forehead, but wholly unharmed, and even stronger and more vigorous than ever.

CHAPTER II.

The Parliament gives a Ball to the King.—The King's Faithful Lieges.—The Queen's Petite Vengeance.—The Return from the Ball.—La Duchesse de Longueville.—Nanon Lastigue.—A New Scandal.—De la Rochefoucauld.—The Duchess an Ardent Frondeuse.

O celebrate the patched-up peace between the queen and the parliament, it was proposed to give a ball to the king at the Hôtel de Ville, on his birthday. Paris, still, was restless and excited, and the queen declared that she was afraid to pass through it after dark. The ball must therefore take place in the day-time, and also begin at an early hour, for both Louis and Philip loved dancing, and the days were short. This was an arrangement that pleased neither the givers of the ball nor the ladies and gentlemen invited to attend it. They were reasonably discontent, for a ball—usually a melancholy

sort of entertainment—is unendurable without the softening beams of artificial light; so becoming to artificial flowers and complexions, and even to the freshness and fairness of real ones. The dresses owe to it more than half their effect; the jewels a large part of their sparkle and glitter, and the music, itself, borrows from it a charm. Every lady who is skilfully got up likes to be thoroughly and artistically lighted up. When she feels that she is so, it gives zest to her spirits, brings a smile to her lips, and lends new brightness to her eyes. The whole countenance, naturally, is animated, and with animated countenances you have a "gay and festive scene."

But to return to the good city of Paris and the Hôtel de Ville: it was represented to the queen that the king's faithful lieges felt hurt at her want of confidence in them; that, if her escort of *mousquetaires* and *chevau-léger* was thought insufficient, the principal men of the *bourgeoisie* would form a detachment to accompany it. The queen declined the proffered escort. "She had unbounded faith in the loyalty of the Parisians. There were perhaps a few turbulent spirits yet unsubdued, but whether or not, for the sake of the health of the royal

children, it was expedient that the ball should take place by daylight." Nothing more could be said. Preparations for the daylight dance were made. But as it could not take place on the greensward, the *salons* were decorated with plants and shrubs from the *Jardin botanique*, and arranged to resemble as nearly as possible a rustic bower on a large scale.

The occasion was one on which to be absent, without the most valid of reasons, was to give offence to one party or the other. So the ladies patched and painted that morning with especial care. The queen had discontinued the use of rouge when she became a widow, and never resumed it, having discovered that her own natural slight colour was more becoming than were the deep tints with which she had been accustomed to overlay it. Madame de Motteville—whose exaggerated praises of "*cette grande reine*" are so suspiciously like covert satire—informs us, that the real object of the queen's desire for a daylight ball was the gratification of "*une petite vengeance.*" The ladies of the Fronde were particularly distasteful to her, and, as it was customary to rouge very highly when *en grande toilette*, the queen confessed that she "hoped by this

daylight display to inconvenience and annoy them."

The ball, nevertheless, passed off satisfactorily. It was meant to seal the reconciliation of the queen and the parliament; to represent a shake-hands after a quarrel, and to attest the loyal feeling of the *bourgeoisie* of Paris towards their king. Night had well closed in before the princes were tired of dancing, and until they were it was not permitted to weary courtier or cit to cry "Hold! enough!" The royal *cortége* was escorted back by several hundreds of the citizens, bearing torches. Frequent were the shouts of "*Vive le roi!*" and a good ear might have detected a response of "*Point de Mazarin!*" The queen is said to have heard it, and to have expressed abhorrence of the "ungrateful *canaille*" she had been lavishing her smiles upon—"*ces messieurs du parlement.*"

The Duchess de Longueville, attended by M. de la Rochefoucauld, appeared at this ball. She was one of the rare *belles* of the period whose beauty would bear the test of daylight. For although there is much talk of beauty in the writings of those days, it is probable that "the fatal gift" was accorded to but few. The smallpox made fearful havoc of the faces of the French women,

and the prevalence of deformity is remarkable. There was scarcely a family of the aristocracy of which some member, male or female, had not a curved spine, a distorted limb, or other malformation; owing, most likely, to the common practice of closely swathing the limbs of infants, and of confiding young children to the charge of careless and ignorant nurses, for the first three or four years of their lives. But the beauty, both of figure and face, of the Duchess de Longueville was the theme of general admiration, and apparently it acted as a spell on all, except her husband, who came within its influence. One must, therefore, believe—though her portraits are not remarkable for grace, or intelligent expression—that she was a very lovely woman. It was perhaps difficult to portray the languor of manner peculiar to her, which, according to a contemporary (De Retz), "*touchait plus que le brillant de celles mêmes qui étaient plus belles. Elle avait aussi,*" he says, "*une langueur même dans l'esprit, qui avait ses charmes, parce qu'elle avait des réveils lumineux et surprenants.*"

The duke is described as "an amiable man of *médiocre* abilities." At Münster, roused by the admiration the duchess excited, and the honours that were paid her, he fell temporarily

into the train of her adorers, but was unable to free himself entirely from the trammels of Madame de Montbazon—a beauty also, but of a different type, and the one who, among the many depraved women of the court of Anne of Austria, is said to have "*conservé dans le vice le moindre de respect pour la vertu.*" And there were among them such women as Nanon Lastigue, the daughter of a shopkeeper of Agen. She possessed neither beauty nor wit, and wit and culture—of which Mademoiselle de Scudéry affords an instance—were then formidable rivals of mere personal charms.

But this Nanon was audacious and lively, and she was the mistress of the Duke d'Epernon, who was credited with having poisoned his first wife, the natural daughter of Henry IV. and the Marquise de Verneuil. He afterwards married one of Richelieu's nieces, and, though she still lived, yet the queen received Madame Lastigue, whom the duke, who was attached to the court, presented to her. Where he had any authority, he exacted that *les dames de qualité* should yield precedence to his Nanon. He commanded the infantry at that time, and Mazarin, being desirous of securing the Duc de Candale—D'Epernon's son—as a husband for

one of his nieces, made a point of seeking his approbation of all promotions, and changes in that corps, before confirming them. Further to obtain his favour, he paid visits of great ceremony to Nanon. The courtiers and *grandes dames* followed his example, and the queen was most gracious to her. Still, homage to D'Epernon's "*fille bourgeoise*" was but grudgingly paid (had she been *une dame de la cour*, then, of course, it would have been *autre chose*), and privately Mazarin's conduct excited much indignation and comment. "He will work his own ruin," said the courtiers, "and perhaps even that of the state, in his infatuation for *les beaux yeux* of M. de Candale."

But a new scandal had begun to occupy the attention of this virtuous court. Many fair shoulders were shrugged; many nicely arched eyebrows raised, many significant glances that seemed to say, "Wasn't I right! didn't I tell you so?" were furtively exchanged when *la belle duchesse*, escorted by La Rochefoucauld, entered the *salon* of the Hôtel de Ville. Since the queen had failed in her promise of conferring on the duke the governorship he had asked for, at a time when it seemed that wishes, to be gratified, had but to be made known, he had

deserted her party, and, determined on revenge, attached himself to the Prince de Condé. Latterly, he had been most assiduous in his attentions to Madame de Longueville, of whom it was whispered about that "although she had never loved her husband she had at last begun to fear him." But M. de Longueville was an easy, pleasant-tempered man, and, if not a devoted husband, by no means a jealous one. After the Peace of Münster he had been appointed Governor of Havre, but eventually was drawn into taking part in the troubles of the Fronde, and this through the enthusiasm of his wife, who was inspired by La Rochefoucauld.

Her influence in her family was immense. The Prince de Condé thought and acted only as she bade him; and it was to turn this influence to account, for the furtherance of his own political objects, that La Rochefoucauld sought to find favour in her eyes. He succeeded only too well. His manners were pleasing and insinuating, and he could feign love, though he felt none. "*Ce qui s'appelle amoureux*," says Madame de Sévigné, "*je ne crois pas qu'il l'ait jamais été.*" He was intensely selfish, and believed all the world to be as selfish and cynical as himself, and his melancholy maxims. He

tried to awaken in the mind of the duchess the ambition to become the heroine of a great party. But, naturally of a languid temperament, and fond of admiration, politics very slightly interested her. It required, therefore, the stronger emotion of love to give them importance in her eyes, and to incite her to enter, heart and soul, as she did, into his views. He controlled her absolutely; and, to serve him, she devoted herself ardently, perseveringly, to that section of the Fronde of which he was one of the chiefs—displaying, in the intrepidity and hardihood of her proceedings, a heroism worthy of a nobler object and a far better cause.

CHAPTER III.

Reassembling of the Parliament.—The Flight from Paris.—Mazarin declared a Traitor.—"The First to the Corinthians."—A Lodging at the Hôtel de Ville.—Birth of Charles Paris.—Les Petits-Maîtres.—Turenne joins the Revolt.—Mazarin retires to Cologne.—Condé seeks Aid from Spain.—The Peasantry flock to Paris.—The Siege of Bordeaux.—Turenne and Condé at Gien.—Condé compared to Cromwell.—The Battle of la Rue St. Antoine.—The modern Bellona.—La Rochefoucauld wounded.—Mademoiselle and her Maréchales.—They enter Orleans in Triumph.—Mazarin banished.—De Retz imprisoned; his Escape.—The Queen recalls Mazarin.—A Heaven-born Minister.

HEN the parliament reassembled, some very stormy discussions took place; for Mazarin had not fulfilled the terms of the Declaration. He and the queen had determined on leaving Paris secretly. Only Monsieur was made aware of their intention; but when on the point of setting out—at near midnight on the eve of the *jour des rois*—the Duchess de Longueville was informed of it, and invited to accompany the queen. She declined

to do so. All being in readiness, the astonished ladies of the household were desired to enter the carriages that were in waiting, and the queen and her minister, the king and his brother, and their attendants, cautiously and quietly, but with as much speed as possible, proceeded to St. Germain.

The royal palaces were at that time but very ill prepared for an unexpected visit. Mazarin had taken the precaution of sending on three camp-beds, for the use of the queen, the two princes, and himself. The rest of the party, amongst whom was La Grande Mademoiselle, had to sleep upon straw, and so much was wanted that a large price had to be paid for it; indeed, either for love or money, it was with difficulty procured. Men had also to be sent into the woods to cut fagots, to create a cheerful blaze in the enormous fireplaces, if not much warmth; the queen and her court, meanwhile, being compelled to wait, shivering, in the bare, cold, carpetless rooms.

Queen Henrietta, at the Louvre, was suffering from the same privation, which was, indeed, a general, though a temporary one. The coadjuteur, paying her a visit a day or two before the siege, found her sitting by her daughter's

bedside. "I am keeping poor Henrietta company," she said; "she is too cold to get up, and no wood is to be had for fires." Mazarin not having paid her pension for upwards of six months, she was reduced to rely on the supplies furnished to the palace; these had failed, chiefly because the army of the Fronde was absorbing all the serving men, and its manœuvres amusing the serving women. The coadjuteur returned to the parliament, explained to them the queen of England's discomfort from the negligence of Mazarin, and immediately they voted, and sent over for her use a sum of twenty thousand francs.

The flight from Paris was thought, by Anne and her minister, to be a very bold and decided step. In a few days they expected to be urged to return. But instead of bringing back the queen and her cardinal in triumph, the parliament, on the 8th of January, issued their famous decree declaring Mazarin an enemy to the sovereign and to the state, and a disturber of the public peace. All good subjects of the king were "enjoined to fall upon and seize the traitor, whensoever and wheresoever they might come upon him, and to deliver him up to justice."

The coadjuteur, compelled to decide for the

court or the parliament, declared for the latter, and carried the regular clergy of Paris with him. Four thousand horse, and ten thousand infantry, were raised, and were commanded by the Dukes d'Elbœuf, de Longueville, de Bouillon, and de Beaufort (who had recently escaped from Vincennes), with the Prince de Conti as "Generalissimo of the armies of Paris." Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans, who could not make up his mind which side to espouse, to avoid taking any part in the civil war, went to bed and pretended to have the gout. But the revolt was now organized, the gauntlet thrown down, and the siege of Paris, which began on the 9th of January, continued for three months. A regiment, raised at the expense of the coadjuteur, and commanded by the Chevalier de Sévigné, was called the "*régiment de Corinthe*," of which place he was titular bishop. To meet regular troops it went forth in high glee, in all the pride of a showy uniform, flying feathers and banners. At the first check it received, it displayed its valour by discreetly running away, and its prowess was celebrated by the satirical song-writers, as "The first to the Corinthians." Every event of this memorable siege afforded food for mirth

and raillery. Amidst general disorder there was general gaiety, light-heartedness, and *esprit.*

Of the chiefs of the revolt, none knew exactly what he wanted, consequently there was no union among them. This probably saved the crown from slipping from the head of Louis XIV. to that of the Grand Condé, who doubtless, had he made it his aim, might have worn it. But civil war was repugnant to his principles, though circumstances eventually drew him into it.

When Madame de Longueville appeared on the scene, she was about to be confined, and instead of her own hôtel, she selected for the purpose, "in order to give confidence to the people," the Hôtel de Ville. She and her step-daughter (afterwards Duchess de Nemours) were, on their arrival, conducted to the registrar's room, which appears to have been unfurnished, or nearly so. But the Hôtel de Longueville was not far off, and orders were sent thither to bring over beds and chairs for the ladies. Apologies were made for the bad fastenings of the doors and windows. This inconvenience they made light of, but inquired particularly if there were rats in the room. "A few, only," the attendants thought. However, the duchess sent again to her hôtel for three or

four cats. On the *fête* of Charlemagne she gave birth to a son, who was christened Charles Paris. The Corps Municipal assisted at his baptism, representing the city of Paris as his sponsor. He was placed in a cradle on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, with a guard of honour stationed near to protect him. The troops defiled, and the various trades passed in procession before him. The *poissardes*, and *dames de la Halle*, came to look at this wonderful infant, and to give him a blessing and a kiss. Though it was winter, they brought an abundance of violets and spring flowers, wherewith to deck his cradle, which was entirely covered with their floral offerings. The duchess, in heroic verse, was compared to the mother of the Gracchi, and to Livia offering her child on the altar of her country.

Charles I. was beheaded at this time, and the event filled the court with consternation. The queen earnestly entreated the protection of the Prince de Condé for herself and sons. The prince considered that his services had been inadequately rewarded; that the court and the queen were ungrateful; yet he determined to defend the king against the Fronde. The parliament had been endeavouring to over-

come his hesitation, and to prevail on him to give them his support, and their cause the *prestige* of his name. He was now to appear in arms against them, and they did not shrink from the encounter. But so violent had the meetings of this assembly become, that the Duc de Brissac urged the coadjuteur not to attend them unarmed, and brought him a poniard to wear under his *soutane*. The handle of this weapon being on one occasion partly visible, the Duc de Beaufort called attention to it, at the same time exclaiming: "*Voilà le bréviaire de notre coadjuteur.*" This, as usual, caused much raillery, and became the subject of many an epigram and satirical couplet.

The Prince de Condé—again dissatisfied, and believing his services insufficiently appreciated—having succeeded in bringing back the queen and her court triumphantly to Paris, immediately after, joined the party that ridiculed and contemned them. His brother, De Conti, the Duc de Longueville, and others, separated from the Fronde, and, with the prince, formed the faction known as "*Les Petits-Maîtres.*" Their object was to overthrow the favourite minister. But Mazarin, by a *ruse*—for the success of which the queen was on her knees

praying in her oratory, with her son by her side—arrested them in the Louvre, and sent them to Vincennes. Mazarin feared the prince, and declined to set him at liberty, when La Rochefoucauld and the Duc de Bouillon offered, as hostages, to take his place. A proposal was also made to Mazarin to give his niece, Mdlle. Martinozzi, in marriage to the Prince de Conti, and this subsequently, at a more convenient season, he assented to.

Madame de Longueville, in the meantime, fled to Holland, and prevailed on Turenne to turn the army he commanded, in the king's name, against the royalist troops. The pleadings of beauty in tears overcame his sense of duty, great captain though he was. But his second in command, Count d'Erlach, was made of sterner stuff, and so vehemently opposed the orders of his general, and resisted any tampering with the men, that Turenne left his army, joined the Spaniards, who were in arms against France, and "*partout il appelait, et avec succès, les bons bourgeois à la revolte.*" It being feared that he would march on Paris and set the princes free, the Duc d'Orleans—who inclined first to one party, then to the other, but desired to be of neither—suggested their removal to the

Bastille. Mazarin and the queen were aware that such a step would too greatly excite the people; therefore, with the utmost secrecy and caution, they sent their captives to Havre.

But all France, and the parliament of the Fronde at its head, demanded the release of the Grand Condé; for the duchess, flying from province to province, had everywhere roused the indignation of the people, and incited them to rebel. Anne and her minister were compelled to yield; the latter in person going to Havre to restore the princes to liberty. He was treated with so much contempt, that he did not venture to return, but retired, first to Liège, then to Cologne. The Duc de Longueville gave up public life, and repaired to his estates. Condé was received in Paris with transports of joy. The coadjuteur then became Cardinal de Retz, by the nomination of the queen, which was confirmed the following year by Pope Innocent X., who hated Mazarin, and wished success to the Fronde.

Still civil war raged. The Grand Condé, so lately hailed as the "saviour of France," could ill brook the idea of having been incarcerated, and again set free, at the will of a court favourite; an Italian priest, abhorred by the nation. Wounded

pride resented this insult. He resolved on war —war against "le Mazarin;" and however parties were divided amongst themselves and split into innumerable sections, all were agreed in crying out "*Point de Mazarin.*" The prince set out from Paris to raise the standard of revolt at Guienne, Poitou, and Anjou, and to seek the aid of Spanish troops. The susceptible Turenne, meanwhile, who had thrown up his command and become a rebel, for the sake of *les beaux yeux* of Madame de Longueville, finding that her smiles were given to another, left the Spaniards and made his peace with the court. As there was no one with equal ability to put in his place, and oppose to Condé, he was pardoned, and restored to the command of the royal army.

Mazarin took this opportunity of leaving Cologne, and returning to France, with 7000 troops he had raised to escort him back, and who wore green, like his liveries, as facings to their uniform. Immediately, the parliament set a price on his head, and sold his books, his pictures and the furniture of his palace to raise the 50,000 crowns they named as the reward. Lampoons innumerable then appeared, offering so much for his ears, so much for his nose, and so

on. Never were misery and mirth so combined as in this war of the Fronde. A party went forth boldly to break down the bridges over which the cardinal and his army were to pass. Several were taken prisoners; a scramble ensued for their release, which, after some ludicrous adventures, heavy blows on both sides, and plenty of jibes and jests, was effected.

Mazarin, having joined the queen, they also, accompanied by the king and his brother, Mademoiselle, and some ladies and gentlemen of the household, set out to make a tour of the provinces, with the view of kindling loyalty. The queen was not well received; but the ill-feeling displayed towards the cardinal annoyed her even more than the cold reception she met with herself. The peasantry and provincial *noblesse* had fled to Paris, where tumult and faction reigned. The camp-beds followed the royal party, and were often delayed three or four hours *en route;* the queen and ladies seeking shelter in wretched inns—the rooms they were shown into having rarely any other furniture than an old wooden table or chair. The king and his brother seem rather to have enjoyed this "roughing it" on their journey. "They amused themselves greatly; played and fought

and learned nothing at all, except that they were very great personages," though temporarily under a cloud.

Bordeaux was wholly devoted to Condé. His wife and child crossed France, in disguise, under the escort of the Conseiller Lénet, to seek refuge there with her husband. The princess sustained a siege of the city, and all the partizans of the prince were assembled there. He himself was scouring the country, everywhere victorious, taking cities and towns, while his Spanish allies, and the detachments of troops raised by his friends, were pursuing the court, whose only hope was then in Turenne. A part of Condé's army was stationed near him, at Gien, but it was commanded by the Ducs de Beaufort and Nemours, whose continual disputes—ending in a duel in which Nemours was killed—dispirited their men, who knowing that Condé was a hundred leagues off, believed that they should fall into the hands of the royalists. But, in the dead of the night, the sentinels at the outposts in the forest of Orleans are challenged by a courier, and the courier proves to be the great Condé himself. In various disguises, and encountering numerous obstacles and adventures by the way, he has come from Agen to head his army.

The confidence of the soldiers revived. The royalists at Blenau were surprised, defeated, and dispersed, and only the ability with which Turenne, with the troops that remained to him, thwarted the movements of the victorious Condé, prevented him from taking captive the royal party at Gien. Condé, therefore, marched directly towards Paris. The people were rejoicing over the battle of Blenau. But Paris was a scene of anarchy. The soldiers pillaged with impunity, and there were perpetual quarrels between them and their officers. The chiefs of the Fronde were negotiating, sending deputations, assembling the chambers; the populace were seditious, and guards were placed at the doors of the monasteries.

Mademoiselle had been a keen observer of all that had passed while journeying from town to town with the royal party. Her report of it to her father, and her admiration of the heroism of Condé, fixed for a moment even his wavering mind. Immediately he assembled troops to oppose the return of Mazarin; then, alarmed at his own boldness, retired to the Luxembourg Palace. Condé's small army of about 7000 men, officered by the most distinguished of *les grands seigneurs*, was quartered in the Faubourg St.

Antoine. Turenne, with about the same number of troops, had brought the court as far as Charonne; but he dared not enter Paris. The people, alarmed, shut the gates of the city, excluding both armies, and carried the shrine of St. Geneviève in procession, with prayers and invocations that the saint would deliver them from "le Mazarin." The coadjuteur become cardinal, was less popular than before, but the *curés* of the old city still were prominent *Frondeurs.*

Mazarin compared the parliament of Paris to that of England, and Condé and his adherents to Cromwell and Fairfax. He found means of conveying to Mademoiselle a promise that she should marry the king, if she would prevent her father from joining the Prince de Condé. Full half of the royal diadems of Europe had been placed at her feet, and she had rejected them all; but she was supposed to be very desirous of wearing the crown of France, though she was then twenty-six, and the king but fourteen. She, however, made a jest of the cardinal's proposal, and replied to it, "*Que la parole donné aux princes on la tiendrait.*"

Then began that desperate battle of St. Antoine, in which the two greatest of French

generals, and the *élite* of the *noblesse*, were arrayed against each other, and some of the best blood of France was shed. While the battle was raging, the king and his brother were taken to the heights of Charonne, whence they could obtain a view of it; and the ignorant and selfish queen-regent, who cared naught for the wishes of the nation, or the misery endured by the people, so that her Italian priest could be retained at her side, was praying in a chapel of the Carmelite convent for the success of Turenne, and of Mazarin's partizans. Terror-stricken ladies and children, shut up in the city, fled for refuge to the church of St. Roch, and were in some cases very roughly treated by *Frondeurs*, who were ransacking the edifice in a pretended search for Mazarinists. The hôtels of the nobility were entered and pillaged, and lawlessness of every kind reigned in the city.

At the gates of St. Antoine lay the wounded of both armies, and to both admittance was refused. Gaston d'Orleans, utterly destitute of energy of will, and veering from one party to another, according to the views of the last person he had spoken with, remained at the Luxembourg, still irresolute as to what course he should take. His daughter, possessing the force of

character wanting in her father, decided that course for him. She presented to him an order to the magistracy, to open the gates forthwith. He signed it; and immediately she set out and delivered it. Proceeding to the Bastille, she desired the commander Broussel, son of the conseiller, to point the cannon and fire on the royal army. They were pointed, as a menace, but Broussel declined to take upon himself to fire them; she, however, less mindful of consequences, had the courage to apply the match herself. This daring, and unlooked-for act spread consternation amongst the soldiers of Turenne, and compelled him to withdraw them. The victorious Condé then entered Paris.

Descending from the Bastille, with a bunch of straw bound on her head, this modern Bellona rode through the city; crying, "*Ceux qui ne sont pas du parti de Mazarin prennent la paille; sinon ils seront saccagés comme tels.*" None, whether partizans or not, were willing to sacrifice themselves for the hated cardinal; so that priests and laity, women and children, sought bunches of straw for their hats, to escape the fury of the inpouring army. The conduct of Mademoiselle de Montpensier roused the enthusiasm of the people to such a pitch, that they

hailed her as "*fille Romaine*" and "*l'idole du peuple.*" The number of killed and wounded, on both sides, in this battle of the Faubourg St. Antoine (2nd July, 1652) was large, in comparison with the smallness of the armies. They fought with obstinacy and desperation, inspired by intense mutual hatred, and the carnage was great. A nephew of Mazarin being killed with the royalists, the people thanked St. Geneviève for this proof of her sympathy with the Fronde. La Rochefoucauld, who is said to have fought with great bravery, received a wound, just above the eyes, which for a time deprived him of sight. With reference to this, he parodied the well-known lines in Du Ryer's tragedy of "Alcyonée," and addressed them to the Duchess de Longueville :

> "Pour meriter ce cœur qu'enfin je connais mieux,
> J'ai fais la guerre au roi, j'en ai perdu les yeux."

He fancied that she no longer served his interests with zeal, but inclined rather to favour the Duc de Nemours, of whom he was jealous, and who was soon after killed in a duel.

But the opening of the gates of Paris and the firing of the cannon of the Bastille were not the only services of Mademoiselle to the prince she so enthusiastically admired. Another

proof of her energy and courage was given in her expedition to Orleans, which city was part of the appanage of her father. The Orleanists had closed their gates to prevent the entry of either army; but the Council of Paris had determined to take possession of it. Mademoiselle offered to head the *bons bourgeois* for that purpose. "Many Roman women," she said, "had performed similar acts, and why should not she show the people the path of duty?" Her offer was not very readily accepted. The enterprise was thought to be one unsuited to her sex, and, heroine though she had shown herself, some doubted her discretion.

She, however, prevailed. The Countesses de Fiesque and de Frontignac accompanied her; also a small retinue and an escort of troops. Mademoiselle and her *maréchales de camp* were attired *en amazone*, and wore helmets and swords. On arriving at the gates of Orleans, they found there the Garde des Sceaux with a *cortége* of forty carriages. He had been sent by Mazarin to hold the town for the king. But the magistrates of the Hôtel de Ville kept him outside the gates while they deliberated whether to open to him or not. The question became more difficult and complicated when the

princess, also, demanded admittance. She too was kept waiting: becoming very impatient at the delay, she galloped, with her retinue, under the rampart on the side next the Loire. Some admiring boatmen pointed out to her a door in the rampart that had been walled up, and offered to make an opening in it. *Frondeurs* inside, on learning what was going on without, aided from within, and soon the victorious Mademoiselle, her *maréchales* following her, mounted the breach, entered the city, harangued the people, and was conducted in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville. Young, handsome, and full of courage, her presence and her eloquent words speedily turned the scale against Mazarin's *envoyé*, who, much discomfited, was compelled, with his forty carriages, to return by the way he came.

Thus, this enterprise, which, failing, would have been utterly ridiculous, by its signal success placed a very fine feather in the helmet of la grande Mademoiselle. She assisted at the councils of war, and gave her opinion freely on the conduct of military affairs. She says, with reference to it, "*J'assure en cela le bon sens, comme en toute autre circonstance, règle tout; et que lorsqu'on en a avec du courage, il n'y a*

point de dame qui ne commandât bien des armées."

The sanguinary "Journée du Faubourg St. Antoine" was followed by a general demand for the final expulsion of Mazarin. And the queen, that she might be allowed again to enter Paris, once more consented to sacrifice her minister. The king was required to publish a formal declaration of his dismissal. This request was also complied with, though at the same time he, or rather the queen, vaunted the services of Mazarin and complained of the injustice of banishing him. As soon as he had taken his departure for Bouillon, the citizens invited the king to re-enter the capital. The court found the city as quiet and orderly as though nothing had occurred to disturb it; for Paris was under the delusion that it had seen the last of "le Mazarin."

It was not expedient to be rigorous towards the *Frondeurs,* but some few arrests were made, and the Duc d'Orleans was requested to retire to Blois, where he remained for the rest of his life. La Rochefoucauld and other rebel *grands seigneurs* found means of making their peace with the queen. But the Cardinal de Retz was arrested in the Louvre, and sent from prison to

prison. He escaped to Rome, and led for some years a wandering life. On consenting to resign his archbishopric of Paris, he was allowed to return to France, where he lived in retirement, in order to pay off the immense debts he had contracted. His character and conduct were changed, and to use the words of Désormeaux, "*après avoir scandalisé la terre, il l'édifia.*" The heroines of the Fronde, in disgrace with the queen and the court, remained in seclusion at their *châteaux*—the duchess, repenting her errors; Mademoiselle, amusing herself with literature, and enjoying the society of a circle of intimate friends.

But scarcely had the Parisians settled down to a quiet life, exhausted by their nine years' struggle to free France from the yoke of "le Mazarin," than, in the name of the king—who had publicly declared him for ever banished the kingdom—the queen recalled him. He entered Paris, as a sovereign returning to the capital of his kingdom, and the king and his brother—brought up by their mother to pay him the obedience and respect due to a father—received him as such. The people being weary of resistance, scarcely any opposition was shown towards him. His partisans even managed to have a

fête arranged for him at the Hôtel de Ville. He threw money with a lavish hand amongst the populace as he passed through the streets, and "*Vive le Mazarin*" at once rose above the cry "*À bas l'Italien.*" He, himself, is said to have expressed contempt for the inconstancy of the people. He urged and obtained the condemnation to death, for contumacy, of the Grand Condé, whom Philip IV. had made general-in-chief of the armies of Spain. Yet, at about the same time, the Prince de Conti married Mazarin's niece, Anna Martinozzi—so inconsistent were the acts of all who were connected with the Fronde.

Mazarin, in fact, reigned once more, and, the spirit of the nation being humbled, reigned absolutely—far more so than ever Richelieu, or any minister of France before him had done. When murmurs at his oppressive exactions reached his ears, he would say, "*Ah! laissons crier les poules dont nous mangeons les œufs.*" There was no question of the king in the government of the country, or, indeed, of the queen, whom he was no longer solicitous to please, all power being in his hands. Yet Anne of Austria, in her deep piety, daily

thanked God, in her oratory, for crushing and dispersing those enemies of the state, who had sought to deprive France of so beneficent, and heaven-born, a minister as "*le doux cardinal.*"

CHAPTER IV.

La Rue de la Tixeranderie.—Le Petit Paul Scarron.—Françoise d'Aubigné.—Mortified Vanity.—Scarron's Offer of Marriage.—La belle Madame Scarron.—Her Brilliant Salon.—Celebrities of the Day.—Les Dames Frondeuses.—Character of Madame Scarron.—Her Desire for "Consideration."—Disappointing when Attained.

N the Rue de la Tixeranderie, and in one of those old *maisons bourgeoises* of the better class, with angular turrets, of which so few examples now remain in modern Paris, there lived in the time of the Fronde, the famous humourist and *bel esprit*, Paul Scarron. And a pitiable object, indeed, to look upon was "*le pauvre petit* Scarron," with his contracted and distorted limbs, and his head bowed down on his chest. He suffered severely from acute rheumatism, brought on by careless exposure to cold and damp in the wild days of his youth. Now, a helpless cripple, he is confined to his house, and is wheeled from room to

room in a chair. There is attached to it a sort of desk or table, with writing materials, and when alone he dashes off easily and rapidly, being even as nimble with his fingers as he is ready with his wit—many a keenly satirical couplet and many a bitter lampoon.

During the Fronde, Scarron's house was the head-quarters of those lively, scurrilous pamphleteers, of whom he was regarded as the chief. The "Mazarinades" were the product of his pen, and much of the witty and licentious literature of the Fronde was issued under his auspices, when he was not actually its author. The Fronde divided families, separated friends, and had broken-up society. Many of the *noblesse* had fled from Paris; those that remained, in a great measure, secluded themselves and watched the course of events; inclining ever to the winning side, whether it were the court or the parliament. Yet, twice or thrice in the week, there assembled at Scarron's all that Paris then contained of the wealthy, the witty, the noble, the learned, and the most distinguished of both sexes. And the attraction was simply Scarron. For, notwithstanding his affliction, and, often, intense sufferings, there was not, perhaps, in all France a man of more gaiety and good-humour,

of more sprightly fancy, more varied information, and keener wit, or whose society was more generally liked and sought after.

In 1651, Scarron, then in his forty-first year, married a pretty young girl of sweet sixteen. Compassion for a poor friendless orphan was his motive, a desire to escape the fate of a convent drudge was hers. For Françoise d'Aubigné (afterwards Madame de Maintenon), the granddaughter of the famous Calvinist chief, Agrippa d'Aubigné, having lost at an early age both father and mother, had been received by a distant relative, Madame de Neuillant, who proposed to herself the pious task of bringing the little heretic into the fold of the faithful. With some difficulty this was accomplished. Madame de Neuillant, having saved the soul of her young relative, became anxious to give up the charge of her to any religious community who would be willing to take her without the usual *dot*, towards which her family connections, both Protestant and Catholic, had declined to contribute.

She had been carefully educated by her mother, up to the age of fourteen, and she could embroider with marvellous skill—advantages which Madame de Neuillant considered might

be turned to account, and compensate for the pecuniary deficiency. Meanwhile, she made Françoise very useful as a servant. As such, she attended her kind relative one evening to the Rue de la Tixeranderie. She had but lately arrived from Niort. The elegant dresses, therefore, of the free-and-easy ladies assembled at Scarron's, and even the metamorphosis she observed in Madame de Neuillant's *toilette*, made a deep impression upon her, from the contrast between them and her own old-fashioned, shabby attire. The more she surveyed the long sweeping trains, the more she became conscious that her short cotton frock displayed, at least, a quarter of a yard of her legs above the ankles. She blushed with shame and vexation, in the obscure corner she had been permitted to stand in to have a view of the fine folks as they entered. There were silks and satins, and lace and pearls; frizzed *coiffures*, and short curls banded with rolls of false tresses, so different from her own simple coil of dark hair. All looked so stately, so handsome, so happy; and all were treated with so much deference by the gentlemen; whose *toilettes* were not a whit less elaborate than those of the ladies. "Ah! why should not also Françoise

d'Aubigné play a great part in the world?"—and she wept and sobbed aloud.

Madame de Neuillant was shocked, and hurried poor Françoise out of sight. But Scarron had observed her, and inquired who that tall fine girl might be, and what was the cause of her grief. Madame explained. Scarron, who was very far indeed from being rich—though he sometimes received large sums, which he spent so recklessly that his purse was more frequently empty than full—was, nevertheless, kind-hearted and generous. He declared that he would himself provide the poor girl's *dot*, if she had any real inclination for the seclusion of a convent. An interview took place the next day, when, to the horror and indignation of Madame de Neuillant, Françoise expressed no desire, but much disinclination, for the life of a nun. Reproaches and menaces followed. "If she would not be a nun, what then?" The culprit had nothing to say; but Scarron, who had been silent for awhile, replied to Madame's question, "Would Mademoiselle d'Aubigné be his wife?" He was so accustomed to jest, and naturally was so little regarded as "a marrying man," that the elder lady was somewhat annoyed at his ill-timed joke, as she thought it. But Scarron

having convinced her that his proposal was made in perfect seriousness, and that, unlike the convents, he would require no *dot*, the question was put to Françoise—"Would she be Madame Scarron?" With a smile and a blush, she unhesitatingly said, "Yes." And so they were married, as soon as Scarron could divest himself of his clerical dignity of Abbé, which he did by disposing of it, to a *valet de chambre*, for a good round sum, which helped to fit out the bride duly to shine in his *salon* as a *belle* of the period.

It had been hitherto the fashion to visit the witty Paul Scarron, who, owing to his infirmities, could himself visit no one. Henceforth it became the fashion to visit the beautiful Madame Scarron. In his letters, he tells of the *grands seigneurs* and *grandes dames* who daily besiege his house and throng to his poor *salon* in the evening; and that he and his "*belle amie*" hold quite a court. And it is certain that her natural refinement, and sense of the *convenable*, wrought a change both in Scarron, himself, and in the tone of his society. She acquired much influence over him, and, to please her, he abstained greatly from that licentiousness which too generally had characterized his writings, and

oftener marred than added force to his sallies of wit.

As the agitation of the Fronde subsided, the society *chez* Scarron became more brilliant and select than when, during the heat of party struggles, noisy pamphleteers and satirists had formed so large an element in it. Men of letters frequented it for the sake of the sprightly conversation of the learned and witty host; men of the sword and of the gown went there for relaxation; no longer to discuss public affairs, or to organize a system of opposition to the minister whose power seemed to grow with the resistance offered to it. The ladies patronized the *salon* of the Rue de la Tixeranderie, not only to display their *toilettes*, and to be amused and admired, but by their vivacity, their *esprit*, their conversational powers, and the brightness of their presence, to give zest to the pleasures of the evening.

It was not a second Hôtel de Rambouillet, with its suite of splendid *salons* and wealthy and artistic surroundings, though several of the Rambouillet circle were there; and probably more at their ease, in Scarron's spacious but poorly decorated rooms, than in the famous *salon bleu* of the marquise. Corneille, modest

and retiring; Chapelain, more pretentious, yet learned and talented, though no genius; La Fontaine, simple in manner, and, though in poverty, contented; the witty Bachaumont also, who named the Fronde, and wrote very pleasant verses; Nicholas Poussin, then perhaps the greatest painter in Europe—poor in purse, but richly endowed with the poetic imagination of genius, and who excited so much envy in France, whither he had been invited to return, that, disdaining all cabals, he again left it for Rome; the historian, Varillas, and De Bouthillier de Rancé—then translating Anacréon, and leading a life of dissolute pleasure, by-and-by to be followed by the austerities of La Trappe; Saint Evremond, whose satirical account of the retreat of the Duc de Longueville into Normandy had been rewarded by Mazarin with a pension of three thousand francs. These and many other of the *gens-de-lettres*, and *beaux esprits* of the time, frequented Scarron's house.

Often, too, before his arrest, the Cardinal De Retz might be met there. He then availed himself of Scarron's ready and caustic pen to put forth tirades he cared not to acknowledge, though he approved and disseminated them. Mesdames

de Sévigné and de Coulanges, also (the former reappeared in society in 1652 after the death of the marquis and the arrangement of her pecuniary troubles) *frondeuses* both of them, from their family connection with De Retz, and their great regard for him personally. The Comtesse de Fiesque, the Duchesse de Chévreuse, and, in fact, all the society of the Fronde, visited Scarron. Mademoiselle de Lenclos had absented herself from Paris for three years, whilst the troubles of the Fronde were at their height. She had passed them at the Château de Villarceaux, and her surprise was great, on her return, to find Scarron's poor *ménage* presided over by a young wife, who attracted to it all the *beaux cavaliers* and *belles dames* of the Marais, with whom it was the fashion to extol her charming manners, amiability, and beauty.

Not that Madame Scarron really was beautiful. She was tall, well formed, fresh and fair, and in the heyday of youth—*la beauté du diable*—which, with her assiduity to please, gained for her the patronizing approval of her own sex, and the admiration and homage of the other. She was exposed to many temptations, no doubt, but the coldness of her nature was her

safeguard, and, besides, she was looking forward to a position of consideration in the world, as she herself has told us. If she ever loved any one, it was probably the Marquis de Villarceaux. But St. Simon has, in that respect, been particularly unjust towards her. Of her early years he knew nothing, except from the reports of those who were jealous of the influence she later in life acquired at court. The poverty she was reduced to after the death of Scarron, and until she obtained—through the interest of Madame de Montespan—a small pension from Louis XIV., is of itself a denial of the conduct he attributes to her.

Yet neither as Madame Scarron nor Madame de Maintenon, did she display qualities that usually excite much love or esteem. She was a model of the *genre convenable*. She had thoroughly studied her own character, and knew what points of it to keep in the shade and what to bring forward for the world's inspection. She prudently availed herself of every opportunity of cultivating her mind, of acquiring knowledge, and during her nine years with Scarron she had had great facilities for doing so. She was better read than most women of her time; she wrote with

more correctness, and far more elegance, than Sévigné, and might, had she chosen, or had it suited her purpose, have shone as a *bel esprit*, as her letters attest. But her single aim was to rise in the world, to be considered, to be looked up to; and, to further her aim, she knew how to efface herself in the presence of the rich mediocrities who patronized her in the first years of her widowhood.

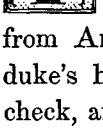
As she grew older there was nothing of the sylph in her figure; she was also large featured, had fine black eyes, and there was a staidness in her manner that harmonized well with her personal appearance. It was neither prudish nor severe, yet not unsuited to the character, she affected, of a devotee. That Madame Scarron fell deeply in love with Louis XIV. when she saw him enter Paris with his bride—as Roederer has suggested—is not easy to believe, or, indeed, that she at any time loved him. She has said that she loved "consideration," and was willing to make any sacrifice of feeling to attain it; and it is likely that, having treacherously displaced Montespan, her hopes after the queen's death rose higher than before, and that she may have even aspired to sharing with Louis the throne of France.

Her complainings, to her brother, prove that she had not obtained the position she expected to secure by working on the fears of the king. For although in his anxiety to save his soul, Louis had resolved to lead a more reputable life, being weary of a dissolute one, and had begun it by marrying his fair preacher, he had gone no further, and apparently had no intention of saying to France, as she had hoped, "Behold your queen!" Her brother, a crazy-headed spendthrift, who cared only to be supplied with money to throw away at the gambling-table, could not understand what his sister still yearned for. "Surely," he said, "if you so long to die, you have the promise *d'épouser Dieu le père.*"

Poor Madame de Maintenon! She paid a very heavy price for "consideration"—as she seemed to confess when, arrived at the height of it, she replied to Madame de Caylus' remark, that "the carp brought to the ponds in the gardens of Versailles languished and died," "*Elles sont comme moi; elles regrettent leur bourbe.*" The constraint and servility of Versailles must have been utterly intolerable when her thoughts flew back to the freedom, and the *sans façon* life, of the Rue de la Tixeranderie.

CHAPTER V.

The Duke and Duchess de Montausier return to Paris.—An Epitaph.—The Bride of Vladislas of Poland.—Jean Casimir.—Death of Voiture.—Jean Louis Balzac.—The Prize of Eloquence.—A Presentation Gold Chain.—"Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus."—Dedicated to Anne de Bourbon.—Cyrus and the Princess Mandane.—Description of Marseillès.—Notre Dame de la Garde.—Boileau's Remarks on "Le Cyrus."—Bossuet Compares Condé to Cyrus.—Novels of Madame de La Fayette.—Succeed the Scudéry Romances.—Smouldering Love of Liberty.

 HE Duke and Duchess de Montausier lived in a style of great magnificence in Paris after their return, in 1653, from Angoumois—where the influence of the duke's high character had kept the people in check, and prevented them from joining in the general revolt. They were both warmly attached to the Grand Condé and the Duchess de Longueville, and, personally, despised Mazarin. But as the duke zealously upheld the royal authority, of which the cardinal was the representative, and against which the prince and his sister were

rebels in arms, there was an estrangement between the families. Society was reorganizing itself; but no attempt was made either by the marquise or her daughter to revive the glories of the celebrated *salon bleu*. They were extinct; the Hôtel de Rambouillet had accomplished its mission, and finally closed its doors. The marquise survived yet some years, but considering herself very near her end, and already dead to society, she, in 1654, wrote her own epitaph:

"Ici gît Arthénice, exempte des rigueurs
Dont la rigueur du sort l'a toujours poursuivie,
Et si tu veux, passant, compter tous ses malheurs,
Tu n'auras qu'a compter les moments de sa vie."

It is scarcely the epitaph one would have expected from the marquise, who had enjoyed, and continued to enjoy, so large a share of the good things of life, and who still had hosts of friends. True, she had just lost her husband, and of her children Julie alone remained to her. Tallemant, whose intimate friendship with her continued to the end of her life, says, that she was then slightly palsied, from having, when younger, eaten amber, habitually, to preserve the fairness and beauty of her complexion.

Several of the best known of the *habitués* of

Rambouillet had died during the agitations of the Fronde. Amongst them was the famous Voiture. He had been requested by the Princess Louise de Gonzague—daughter of the Duc de Nevers—with whose portrait Vladislas of Poland had fallen in love, and, having asked her in marriage, had espoused her by proxy, to attend her while she remained in the capital as her *maître d'hôtel.* This flattered him, for the Polish king had sent an embassy of great magnificence to wait on his queen, with carriages, and an escort surpassing in splendour anything yet seen at the court of France. She was treated there as an empress, and allowed to take the *pas* of the queen-mother. On her departure, Voiture, who stood high in her favour, was invited to accompany her, and as he was *un personnage* in the royal *cortége,* his vanity and conceit rose to such a height, that it was scarcely possible for inferior mortals to approach him with sufficient respect, while his irascibility increased beyond endurance.

Vladislas was disappointed in his bride. He found her less beautiful than her portrait, and not so young as he had thought her. He had been anxiously awaiting her arrival, and collecting rare diamonds, and pearls of great price,

wherewith to deck the peerless young beauty he hoped to present to the admiring Poles as their queen; but as she did not fully realize his expectations—though she was still young and handsome—he resented the blow to his hopes by treating her with marked disrespect. However, happily for her, he died in the following year, when she married his younger brother, Jean Casimir—a singularly restless character—who, before he became king, was a cardinal. Innocent X., at the instance of his sister-in-law, Donna Olympia, released the King of Poland from his priestly vows. Twenty years after he abdicated, went to Paris, and became abbé of St. Germain des Près, but passed much of his time amongst the philosophers and *beaux esprits* of the *salon* of Mademoiselle Ninon, who had then become dogmatical and sedate.

Voiture had not the annoyance of witnessing the humiliation of the Queen of Poland. Having accompanied her as far as Peronne, he then left her and returned to Paris. His health was feeble, and his extremely irregular life still further injured it. A severe attack of the gout ensued, and as bleeding was then the treatment for every ailment, Voiture was bled till he died. Madame Sainctot—the lady to whom the letter that first

brought him fame was addressed—on hearing of his illness, flew to his bedside and was with him to the last. He had gambled away, and squandered in libertinism, nearly the whole of her ample fortune, as well as his own large income. The French Academy went into mourning for him—an honour, that is said, never to have been conferred on any other member of that distinguished society. Voiture did not write for the public, but Conrart and Ménage collected his numerous letters and a few of his poems. Their success was great, seven editions being required within two or three years. His epistolary style was thought perfect, though it is affected and artificial in the extreme; and as the letters treat chiefly of personal matters, but very rarely of the events of the time, they are now wholly destitute of interest.

He had been for twenty years engaged on a romance. Julie d'Angennes had sketched the plot, and Voiture had named it "Aludélis et Zélide," but it was still unfinished when he died. It was his fame as a *bel esprit*, and his pretty graceful sonnets, that made the reputation he enjoyed in his own day.

He left a natural daughter, who had taken the veil, and who held his memory in the greatest

veneration. After his death, being desirous of having his portrait placed in her cell, she learned, to her surprise, that it could not be permitted. His life had been too dissipated, too profane, to allow of his portrait being suffered to find a place in the austere and holy retirement of a cloister. To relieve her distress, it was suggested that he should be painted as St. Louis, and thus, under that saintly disguise, the likeness of the sinner was preserved. It was afterwards engraved by Nanteuil.

Another of the writers of the day whose death had occurred, was Jean Louis Balzac. As a *littérateur*, he stood higher in esteem with the *gens de lettres* than Voiture; for the French language owed much to his endeavour to infuse into prose writing some of the harmony which then existed only in the poetic effusions of the time — light and graceful trifles, which, until the great Corneille elevated the genius of the nation, achieved renown for their authors. Indeed, long after Corneille's *chef-d'œuvres* had appeared, a single sonnet, such as "La belle Matineuse," of De Motteville, sufficed to secure the honour of election to an academic *fauteuil*. Balzac was also celebrated for his epistolary style, which differs from Voiture's in being less

familiar and more precise, just as their characters differed. He was Historiographe de France, and the founder of the prize, in the French Academy, for eloquence. The subject proposed to the first competitors for the prize, was "Glory," and it was awarded to Madeleine de Scudéry; then esteemed the most *spirituelle* and eloquent of the literary women of the seventeenth century.

Madeleine, indeed, wielded a more eloquent pen than any of her literary contemporaries. It was a fertile and busy one too. Had she even been disposed to give it much rest, her brother Georges would hardly have consented; for Madeleine's pen was the Providence he looked to to furnish him with the means of obtaining rare tulips, which often cost a good round sum. Then, his cabinet of portraits had to be completed, an account of which he published in a quarto volume. Often, too, Georges met with irresistible temptations, in the shape of wonderfully carved ivories, pictures, bronzes, and other artistic and expensive trifles. In 1650 Georges' dramatic pieces were considered to possess sufficient merit to entitle him to claim a seat amongst "the forty;" and, a vacancy occurring in that year, he was almost unanimously elected to fill

it. He was a popular *vaurien*, "*un peu fanfaron, mais très chevalresque.*"

Scudéry, having dedicated his "Alaric" to Queen Christina of Sweden, and mentioned in the dedication, in terms of high praise, a person to whom she had once shown much favour, but who afterwards in some way displeased her, was requested by Urbain Chevreau, at the instance of Christina, to withdraw the passage referring to him. Scudéry objected; he had a high esteem for him, and was under some obligations to him as a friend. Chevreau then, in confidence, told Georges that one of Christina's presentation chains, made of the Swedo-African gold, and of the value of 1,000 pistoles, was designed for him, but that he would probably lose it by refusing to expunge the name of the obnoxious person. Georges listened with indignation to this attempt to bribe him, as he conceived, to put a slight on his friend, then exclaimed, energetically, "*Jamais je ne detruirai l'autel où j'ai sacrifié; même pour une chaine aussi grosse que celle que portaient les Incas de Peru!*"

Both Madeleine and Georges were devoted to the Condé family. Georges had fought at Rocroi, Nordlingen, and Lens, and had followed

the fortunes of the prince at Bordeaux and at the siege of Paris. So much was he compromised by his share in the rebellion, that when the Fronde was ended, and the prince entered the service of Spain, Georges was concealed in Paris for some time before he could escape, as many others did, to Normandy. His sister, during the war, had been employed on her grand *chef-d'œuvre*, that wonderful romance, "Le Grand Cyrus." No work of the kind probably was ever so popular, or brought so large a sum to its publisher—not less, according to the present value of money, than between fifty and sixty thousand pounds. It was printed at Rouen, and published by Courbé of Paris, and was in ten thick volumes, which appeared separately, at intervals of about six months; but the demand for it was so pressing that it was sold in sheets, at an increased price, as they were printed off in the interim.

From one end of France to the other, and by all ranks of people; the court, the *noblesse*, the *bourgeoisie*, by all, indeed, who could read, "Le Grand Cyrus" was read, and, as a French writer says, "*On ne lisait pas seulement, on s'arrachait, on dévorait, à mesure qu'ils paroissaient, chacun de ces dix gros volumes.*" The work was dedi

cated to the Duchesse de Longueville, and wherever the fortune of war carried her during those eventful five years, from 1649 to 1653, the volumes were forwarded to her. The plates are by Chauveau, the first engraver of that time, and the arms of the princess appear on the frontispiece of each volume. After the death of the Duc de Longueville, and her withdrawal from the world, to expiate the errors she had fallen into through her infatuation for the selfish and unworthy De la Rochefoucauld—who in his "Mémoires" so pitilessly exposed her weaknesses—she wrote to express her gratitude to both Madeleine and Georges de Scudéry for their constant affection towards her, and their warm defence of her character. She no longer wore jewels, or any kind of personal ornament, but, as a mark of her regard for both brother and sister, she sent them her portrait, set in diamonds.

"Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus" is an allegorical romance, in which, under Persian, Armenian, and other Eastern names, all the principal personages of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIII., and the regency of Anne of Austria, are represented with striking fidelity. Victor Cousin's "La Société du 17ème Siècle

d'après le Grand Cyrus," is composed, as indeed its title implies, almost entirely of extracts from it. He gives a key to "Le Cyrus," which he met with in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. It is but an imperfect one, an abridgment of the original key, which was made a few years after the first publication of Mdlle. de Scudéry's completed work, and to which Tallemant refers; but no copy of it is at present known to be extant.

Le Grand Cyrus is Le Grand Condé, in the vigour of youth and the height of his glory in France, as the conquering general of Rocroi, Nordlingen, Charenton, and Lens, represented in "Le Cyrus" by the siege of Cumes, the battle of Thybarra, etc. Georges de Scudéry was present at those military exploits, and probably furnished details of them, or Mdlle. de Scudéry derived them from trustworthy reports of the time, as they are said to be faithful accounts of the events, as tested by military history. The Princess Mandane is the Duchess de Longueville—she was afterwards frequently addressed by that name. The French aristocracy, generally, figure in this wonderful story of love, politics, and war; also other of the author's contemporaries, of various grades in

the literary world, as well as in "*la société polie.*" Their adventures, their manners, their dress, their dwellings, are all described. There is Madame de Rambouillet, her hôtel, and its famous *salon bleu;* Julie, and her lovely sister; the Duc de Montausier; Angélique Paulet, Voiture, and the Rambouillet circle generally. "Le Cyrus" is, in fact, a gallery of portraits of the aristocratic society of the middle and earlier part of the seventeenth century.

Marseilles and its provincial celebrities are also described, and the description of the town is said to be a faithful picture of what it was at the time Mdlle. de Scudéry wrote. She had accompanied Georges in 1647 to take possession of his sinecure post of Gouverneur de Notre Dame de la Garde de Marseilles. She calls it "*le plus beau lieu de la nature pour sa situation.*" Their literary reputation gained for them so flattering a reception, that a salute of ten guns was fired in their honour. For "Cyrus" was not the only work of Mdlle. de Scudéry that became famous; she already had written "Mathilde d'Aguilar" and "Célinthe," each in a single volume; and the most perfect, and perhaps the most generally interesting, of all her romances, "Ibrahim, ou l'illustre Bassa," in four

volumes. Georges dramatized it, and its success as a play equalled its popularity as a romance. She was also well known at that time as a poetess, and by her "*nom de Parnasse*" of Sappho. But accustomed to the more stirring life of the capital, they soon grew weary of their "exile," as she terms it; and, the governor having no duties to perform, he and his sister returned to Paris. The château of Notre Dame was on a lofty eminence, and very difficult of access. Bachaumont, and the poet Claude Chapelle, who visited it in the course of their travels in the south of France, speak of it in their rhymed account of "Un Voyage à Montpellier," as

"Notre Dame de la Garde,
Gouvernement commode et beau,
A qui suffit pour toute garde,
Un Suisse avec sa hallebarde
Peint sur la porte du château.
Plus d'une heure le rocher nous grimpâmes,
Ensuite à la poste doucement nous frappâmes,
Des gens qui travailloient là proche
Nous dirent, 'Messieurs, là dedans
On n'entre plus depuis longtemps.
Le gouverneur de cette roche
Retournant en cour par le coche
A depuis environ neuf ans,
Emporté la clef dans sa poche.'"

The salary of the governor was proportioned, it appears, to his duties. Georges said, when

the appointment was given to him, that "unless it rained manna at the Château de la Garde, he should die of hunger in that important stronghold. But he liked the style and title. It appeared, in full, in all his works, and on the title-page of Madeleine's, which were usually published in his name; at first, because of the celebrity he had acquired before she began to write on her own account. For many years she had assisted him, and several of the works issued as wholly his, were known to be from her pen.

It is singular that Boileau, in his "Discourse on the Dialogue of the Heroes of Romance," should have reproached Mademoiselle de Scudéry—with whom, though born later in the century, he was contemporary—for depicting, in her Cyrus, a hero so unlike the Cyrus of the Bible promised by the Prophets, or even the Cyrus of Herodotus or Xenophon. As M. Cousin remarks, "How is it that Boileau did not perceive that he was mistaking Mademoiselle de Scudéry for Madame Dacier; that he was laying down rules for an historical work when the question was only of a work of the imagination?" Tallemant des Réaux, who was a friend of the Scudéry and a frequenter of the

same society, remarks, that, neither the actions nor the manners of the heroes of antiquity must be sought for in "Cyrus" or "Clélia," but a resemblance to them in character, and the faithful portraiture of the models she made choice of to represent them. Her Cyrus was before her eyes —a reality—the hero whose military fame then filled Europe, who had saved France from her enemies, and extended the frontiers of the kingdom. Bossuet, himself, in his funeral oration on the death of the Prince de Condé, compares him to Cyrus, as if in confirmation of the justness of the idea of the romancist. It seems probable that Boileau had never read "Le Grand Cyrus," but had merely bestowed a cursory glance on its seven thousand pages.

According to modern ideas, the writings of Mademoiselle de Scudéry are extremely prolix, affected, and sentimental. Yet they are often lively, the thoughts are ingenious and natural, and the conversations abound in witty repartee. Her sentiments are noble; her works thoroughly moral, and interesting, as pictures of the best French society of her day. They brought her large profits and world-wide fame, for many of her works were translated into several languages. Those that were "Eng-

lished by a person of quality" are certainly not improved by the process.

The "Ricovrati" of Padua elected her a member of their society. There was a question of following their example in the Académie Française, and of admitting other learned women as honorary members. The proposal was made by Ménage and supported by Chapelain, but was not agreed to. Woman was already supreme in the *salon*; it was thought dangerous to enthrone her in the *académie*.

Chateaubriand used to say that his mother knew "Cyrus" by heart. This, presumably, was but *manière de parler*. To get the ten volumes of "Cyrus" by heart would have been even a greater feat than to write them. The work was highly esteemed in England, and for a considerable time after the long heroic romances were laid on the shelf in France. Lady Russell said "Clélia," a work of less merit, was "a most improving book." Lady Mary Wortley Montague speaks of "Cyrus," and says that "as a girl she used to devour it, so intensely was she interested in it."

The novels of Madame de La Fayette, which followed the Scudéry romances, though similar in style, are thought by some persons to be

an improvement upon them. Probably, being very short, they may have obtained a reading in more recent times, while the voluminous Scudéry stories have scarcely been looked at. After the Fronde, the intrigues of the court, its ceaseless round of dissipation, and the increase of gambling, left no time for the perusal of those romances *de longue haleine* which had, formerly, been the delight of the leisure hours of both *seigneurs et dames*. With the latter, the short romances or novelettes ("La Princesse de Cleves" and "Zaidé") of the Comtesse de La Fayette found great favour. But they are insipid and affected; her heroes are represented as "*chef-d'œuvres de la nature*" —of itself enough to disgust one with them. The style is negligent, and full of faults which the practised pen of Madeleine de Scudéry knew how to avoid.

With men, both of the *noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie*, romance-reading had, to a great extent, gone out of fashion. Thought had largely developed itself during the eight or nine years of civil commotion. The political pamphlet had contributed towards it, and social and philosophical questions had been discussed with much freedom. And with them the masculine mind

continued to occupy itself, rather than with sentimental fiction, though, throughout the reign of Louis XIV. the independence of spirit that had been awakened in France during the Fronde was sedulously suppressed. But despite all the efforts of absolutism to extinguish it, together with the ardent aspiration for liberty it gave rise to, it smouldered on, until, in the attempt to finally crush it, it exploded, and produced the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

CHAPTER VI.

Les Mœurs Italiennes.—Louis Disposed to Break Bounds.—Increase of Gambling.—The Curé of St. Germain.—The Doctors of the Sorbonne.—Mazarin Unmasks to the Queen.—Georges de Scudéry Married.—Friendship Dashed with Sentiment.—Mdlle. de Scudéry's "Samedi."—Les Coteries Précieuses.—The Scudéry Circle.—The Tuesday Receptions.—Madeleine's Paroquet.—"Clélie."—The Pen of Sappho.—Portraits and Entretiens.—"Les Mystères des Ruelles."—Madeleine's Annuity.

UNDER Mazarin, the court and society did not improve, either in morals, or manners. After his triumphant return to France, *les mœurs Italiennes*—as it was customary to call the dissolute mode of life that prevailed—were then introduced; the cardinal's aim being to corrupt the mind of the young king. Brought up in ignorance and effeminacy, and all knowledge of affairs of state withheld from him, Mazarin hoped to indispose him from taking upon himself the cares of government, and thus, by prolonging his own term of power,

to rule him, as his father had been ruled by Richelieu. Once, indeed, there was an indication that the king was disposed to break bounds, when, in his seventeenth year, roused by the information that the parliament seemed inclined again to resist the edicts of his minister, he rode from Vincennes, equipped for the chase, and with his riding-whip in his hand, entered the hall where they were assembled. In an authoritative tone he said, "It is well known that your meetings have been the cause of great misfortunes to the country; I order you, therefore, to desist from discussing my edicts. Mr. President, I forbid you to allow these meetings, and I forbid every one of you to ask for them."

Those who were dissatisfied with the existing order of things—and many were extremely averse to it—were by no means displeased at this high-handed proceeding of the young monarch. It seemed to augur the speedy downfall of the cardinal. But nothing of the sort resulted from it. Louis was too fully occupied with *fêtes* and *carrousels*, the chase, and the cardinal's libertine suppers; and the cardinal went on plundering the state with impunity, elevating his family, and enriching both them and himself. He gave also a fresh impetus to

the already too prevalent habit of gambling. He was expert at games of hazard, and played for high stakes; men often lost their estates to him, and women their jewels. The queen "played only a moderate game," and still preferred the theatre to the gambling-table.

The queen's love for the play had brought upon her many admonitions from the *curé* of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and her conscience at last took alarm. His denunciations fell heaviest on the "*Comédies à machines, à l'Italienne.*" The bishops were convoked, and, after long deliberation, they declared that historical and serious plays might be witnessed without scruple. Several were even of opinion that the courtiers, whose duty it was to attend her at the theatre, might by that means be drawn from more objectionable pastimes elsewhere. It was not incompatible, then, with the queen's professed piety to sanction these public amusements. The devotions of kings, they said, must be regulated by rules more elastic than the devotions of less exalted individuals, and circumstances determine what was or was not befitting or seemly in their case.

Again, then, the little theatre of the Palais Royal was graced by the presence of the queen

—the king, the cardinal, and a train of ladies and gentlemen of the court accompanying her. Against the liveliness and mirth of the *petites pièces à l'Italienne*, was set, as a penitential counterbalance, the heavy-weighted dialogue of some production of the cardinal's playwrights. Not that he favoured men of letters, he despised them; but he would often propitiate those whose pens he feared, and prevent them from writing a telling satire or clever pamphlet, by inducing the production of a bad play, and rewarding it with a pension, or the gift of some place, or office, that could be disposed of for an acceptable sum. And was not this better than cutting off their heads *à la* Richelieu? The *curé* of St. Germain, however, was not so easily propitiated. The presentation to a bishopric, or the gift of a rich abbacy, could not have reduced him to silence. He was bent on carrying his point, and boldly denounced the queen guilty of *péché mortel*—seven doctors of the Sorbonne supporting him.

Anne of Austria was sorely disquieted. She loved both her oratory and her theatre, her prayers and her plays. She did not neglect the former, and was unwilling to be deprived of the latter. The question of *péché mortel* was there-

fore formally submitted to the consideration of the doctors of the Sorbonne. Twelve of them opposed the seven who had agreed with the *curé*, and, with the usual result, convinced them, against their will, that they were in error. It was not necessary, said the twelve, to adhere strictly, in the seventeenth century, to the customs of the apostolic age. In founding the first Christian churches a strict discipline was needed; and, even now, to the unenlightened of the flock of the faithful, the world's pleasures must be sparingly conceded. But if her majesty, as a relaxation from the heavy cares of state, sought amusement at the theatre, so long as the play contained nothing scandalous, or contrary to good manners, it was an innocent pastime that without the slightest qualm of conscience might be indulged in. Thus, the sufferings of the queen's sensitive nature were healed; and in a happy blending of piety and pleasure, her life again flowed on, undisturbed by the remonstrances of the pious *curé*, whom the courtiers derided for his efforts to deprive them of the play.

Yet there was one bitter thought that occasionally brought a pang to the breast of Anne of Austria—the thought that the power delegated

to her favourite had irrevocably slipped out of her hands; that he now ruled the nation absolutely and independently; ruled the king, ruled her, and was not solicitous to conceal that fact from her. She was fond of homage; but the cardinal had become less deferential than formerly, less assiduous in paying his court to her, and her disappointment and resentment often found expression in impotent opposition to his views. The queen passed more time in her oratory; but piety was not yet the fashion—for the cardinal made a jest of religion—and, with the exception of a few ladies in immediate attendance upon her, gallantry and indevotion were the rule at court. "*Mazarin, outre son avarice,*" says Madame de Motteville, "*méprisait les plus honnêtes femmes, les belles-lettres et tout ce qui peut contribuer à la politesse des hommes.*" "*Les hommes et les femmes de la cour s'occupaient également de cabales et d'intrigues; et pour l'ordinaire faisaient gloire de n'estimer que la vanité, l'ambition, l'intérêt et la volupté; et le cardinal en était la cause.*"

In the midst of this corruption, more than one attempt was made to carry on the work of the extinct Hôtel de Rambouillet. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who, from girlhood to

middle age, had been accustomed to spend her evenings in the society of that learned and brilliant circle, felt keenly the loss of a distraction which from habit had become a necessity to her. The large sums received for "Cyrus" had been chiefly employed in paying her brother's debts. But Georges was now in Normandy, where he had married Mademoiselle de Martin-Vost, a young lady of good family and some property, who had fallen in love with his literary reputation—"Le Cyrus" having been attributed to him—and appears to have been equally pleased with his air of *grand seigneur*, as their marriage took place after a very short acquaintance. The brother and sister had always lived together, and Georges had persistently frowned away all Madeleine's suitors; he could not, with his extravagant habits, afford to lose the aid of her prolific pen.

To her constant friend, Pélisson, he had a furious dislike. He and Madeleine often met in society, but Georges believed, or affected to believe, that these frequent meetings were assignations, and rigorously forbade them. A true and strong friendship had grown up between Pélisson and Madeleine—a friendship that continued throughout life. There was in

it, doubtless, a large dash of sentiment; it was one of those friendships that approach very near to love, but happily contrive to avoid being wrecked on that dangerous shoal. Pélisson exercised an extraordinary influence over women—women, too, of distinguished talent and elevated rank. But the fascination was in no degree owing to physical advantages. "*Disgracieux de taille et de visage,*" remarks Sévigné, "*mais en le dédoublant on trouvait une belle intelligence et une belle âme.*" There was, perhaps, not an uglier man in France; though Guillérague's *mot* on Pélisson, "that he abused the privilege that had been conceded to men of talent to be ugly," was often borrowed and applied elsewhere.

Pélisson, as a youth, is said to have been fairly good-looking; his disfigurement was the work of small-pox of the most malignant type. So greatly was he affected by the change in his personal appearance, that for some two or three years he secluded himself in the country, unable to overcome his extreme self-disgust. Yet, under an exterior so unprepossessing, so repellent to sympathy, he had the gift of both feeling and inspiring it. He was several years younger than Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who

was disinclined to marriage, and had refused two or three advantageous offers. In one of her letters she says: "*Selon moi, le mariage est la chose du monde le plus difficile à faire bien à propos. Trois fois dans ma vie j'ai préféré la liberté à la richesse, et je ne saurois m'en repentir.*"

Pélisson was confidential secretary to the famous Nicholas Fouquet (Marquis de Belle Isle and *surintendant des finances*) when Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who had devoted her talents and many years of her life to the support of her brother's extravagances, felt that the time had arrived to assert her right to be free. She had hired or purchased a house of modest pretensions in the Vieille Rue du Temple, where she could receive her numerous literary friends. It was then a pleasant, rural spot, her house standing in a garden full of fruit-bearing trees, surrounded by tall shrubs and bushes, where "the birds," she says, "built their nests, brought up their families undisturbed, and repaid her for their share of the fruit with their cheerful songs." In this unpretending dwelling she established the famous Samedi—a Rambouillet on a small scale. There was no *salon bleu*, with its velvet and gold, its

mirrors and carvings, and the rich and varied adornments of that far-famed wealthy establishment. But every Saturday her *salle de reception* was filled with the most eminent of the *gens de lettres* of the old Rambouillet set. Personal merit and talent had been more considered than mere rank at the hôtel of the marquise, yet the most illustrious of the aristocracy frequented it. They also formed part of the circle of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, the Duke and Duchess de Montausier setting the example; the difference being that it was a coveted honour to be received at the hôtel in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre, but a desire to *do* honour to a woman of high character and distinguished abilities that induced *les grands seigneurs et grandes dames* to frequent the *maisonnette* in the Vieille Rue du Temple.

The "Saturdays" of Mademoiselle de Scudéry were a great success. They soon became as famous as her romances, and the fashion she had set of "having a day," was very generally followed. The literary coteries of the "*précieuses*"—a term then beginning to be used, but which was taken in no ill sense until some years later—were numerous; none, however, attained celebrity equal to that of their foundress.

The ladies of the lesser *noblesse* and of the *haute bourgeoisie*, who were *spirituelles* and possessed taste, leisure, and wealth, sought an introduction to these assemblies. But although they were purely literary, very few lady authors were admitted. Men of culture and of agreeable manners, found a welcome there; for Mademoiselle thought a party of women apt to grow dull. She had remarked that, she said, and also that on such occasions the unexpected entrance of one of the sterner sex would immediately brighten up the whole party.

On Tuesday she received her most cherished and intimate friends; Ménage—who then lived in the old secularized cloister of St. Denis de la Chartre, and, following the fashion, had taken Wednesday for assembling his literary friends; Chapelain—"*si bien rentié*," yet so parsimonious, that Madeleine had to devise some delicate way of letting him know that his dress was startlingly shabby, and that when he presented himself he looked more like a mendicant than one of her circle of intimates. Then there was *la jeune* Madame Scarron, in whom she was interested, and, in a certain sense, protected; also Madame de Sévigné, who was interested in *her*. De la Rochefoucauld often dropped in,

and oftener on Tuesday than Saturday; even Madame de Montbazon, with Madame de La Fayette, who had just essayed her pen in the portrait of Madame de Sévigné. Those sworn friends, Ninon and St. Evremond, sometimes chaperoned Madame Scarron. Claude Perrault, the architect of the exterior colonnade of the Louvre, was her constant visitor, and Paul Pélisson never was absent; at the Saturday literary *réunions* he acted as secretary.

These and many other celebrities of the literary world and the *beau monde*, assembled, more or less numerously, on Tuesday from two to five. The hours of reception, when the *cercle* was learned and middle-aged, were spent in conversation, "*littéraire et galante*," as we are told; when young and lively, in discussing the fashions, and being witty and merry at the expense of the court. If the weather was particularly fine, they took a turn in the garden, gathered and ate cherries, of which she had some of a remarkably fine kind, and, amongst her many accomplishments, numbered the useful art of making excellent preserves of them, as treats for her friends. Or they strolled in the extensive grounds of the old Temple, where the hôtel of the Grand Prieur Vendôme was then

erected, or walked in the green lanes of the pleasant rural neighbourhood. The famous Leibnitz did not disdain to address verses to Madeleine's paroquet, promising him immortality with the name of his mistress. She was fond of birds and all domestic animals, because, she said, they showed so much friendship for her. Life became a far more enjoyable possession to her after a kind Providence threw Georges in the way of Mademoiselle de Martin-Vost, and, so, took the gay gallant spendthrift off her hands.

She was exceedingly fond of society, and must have very skilfully husbanded her time, and turned every minute to account, or she could scarcely have accomplished so much writing. For she wrote her eight volumes of "Clélie" while Georges was in exile; yet she was to be met with at most parties of pleasure, often taking country rambles, and diligently returning the visits she received. The hours she devoted to writing were the early ones of the morning, and the later ones of the evening, and she wrote easily and rapidly. "Clélie," though it was well received and went through several editions, was considered inferior to "Cyrus." It has in it more of the affectation that was beginning to be

ascribed to the "*Précieuses.*" The subject is taken from Roman history, so far as well-known names are concerned; but the facts of history are not in it, or, indeed, intended to be. It is the history of her own immediate circle, and the civil war of the Fronde; the incongruity between the names of the heroes and the actions attributed to them being often very striking. This was less apparent in "Cyrus," because little or nothing was known of the manners and customs of ancient Persia, and the action of the story was more heroic. But both "Cyrus" and "Clélie" are works that do honour to the French language. Calprenède was extremely jealous of the success of "Clélie," and revenged himself by endeavouring to depreciate Mademoiselle's *réunions;* but he prevented neither its *succès d'estime* nor *succès d'argent.*

The description of Carthage is fine, and has been pronounced to be not an unfaithful one. Many lively pictures are also given of the combats outside Paris (otherwise Rome) and the *émeutes* within. "Clélie" contains seventy-three portraits of persons of celebrity, so cleverly characteristic that they were immediately recognized by their contemporaries. Ladies of distinction desired to see themselves depicted in

Mademoiselle de Scudéry's romances; not that she unduly flattered them, like Madame de La Fayette in her portrait of Madame de Sévigné, who was thus addressed: "Heaven has bestowed graces upon you, madame, which never have been given but to you, and the world is indebted to you for coming into it to show it a thousand agreeable qualities before wholly unknown to it." "The pen of Sappho," writes a French author, "competed with the pencil of Philippe de Champaigne, as well as with that of Mignard and of Petitot, so faithfully did she portray both person and character." Tallemant names several of the originals, and the descriptions of Scarron and his home, and of Madame de Maintenon in her youth, have been pronounced more correct than any other extant.

These sketches of the *élite* of society brought pen-and-ink portraits into fashion, and for some time this literary caprice formed the favourite amusement of the *cercle* of the Grande Mademoiselle, while she and her *maréchales* lived retired and in disgrace, at the Château de Six Tours (St. Fargeau). Those courageous *Frondeuses*, who had not been included in the cold reconciliation that some of the turbulent nobles effected with the court, amused themselves

with sketching their own portraits; and they did not shrink from depicting, what they considered, the principal beauties of their persons, but with a free, bold hand, set down both their physical and mental qualities. These "Divers Portraits" Mademoiselle printed, and submitted to the public; her own portrait, sketched by herself, being of the number, also those of Louis XIV., the Grand Condé, and Christina of Sweden.

Mademoiselle de Scudéry's portraits of her contemporaries, her "Conversations morales" and "Entretiens sur toutes espèces de sujets," are still full of interest. She excelled in conversation, that art so sedulously cultivated at Rambouillet, and in society generally in the middle of the 17th century; an art which it was the aim of the literary coteries of "*Les Précieuses*" also to sustain. And though in their desire still further to perfect the language, they fell into many affectations of speech, yet their influence on society was beneficial, and, in spite of their prudery, their *réunions* promoted social intercourse, and were schools of good manners in a time of general depravity. The "Conversations" were written when "*précieuse*" had become a term of ridicule—not so much owing

to Molière's comedy, as to "La Précieuse, ou les mystères des ruelles," of the Abbé de Pure, which preceded it. It was a work more malicious than witty; the abbé, for some offence against their rules, having been excluded from the coteries of the *précieuses*. But in the "Conversations," there is no straining after effect, no false refinement, or example of the bad taste attributed to the "*précieuses ridicules*" with whom Mademoiselle de Scudéry has been erroneously classed. On the contrary, they are *chef-d'œuvres* of their kind; and together with her portraits and letters, possess both literary and historic value—as they afford a pleasing idea of the sort of conversation that formed the charm of the distinguished circle of Rambouillet, and generally of that polished society of the seventeenth century of which Mademoiselle de Scudéry is the acknowledged representative.

It was considered a reproach to the government, that one held in such high esteem by her friends, and also by the public, for the perfect propriety of her conduct, the rectitude of her principles, and the brilliancy of her talents, should have no pension conferred on her; while a few madrigals, or sonnets, from the pen of some

mediocre versifier often undeservedly received the recognition due to literary merit. Scarron wrote—after he had with difficulty obtained a small pension for himself, from the queen, as her "Malade":

> "Siècle méconnoissant, le dirai-je à ta honte,
> On admire Sapho, tout le monde en fait compte.
> Mais, O siècle, à l'estime et aux admirations,
> Pourquoi n'ajouter pas de bonnes pensions?"

That Fouquet, who so liberally patronized talent, should have omitted to pension Mademoiselle de Scudéry, is surprising. Ménage reproached Colbert for similar neglect. Yet Mazarin, who was said to despise both *les femmes honnêtes et les belles lettres*, left her, by will, an annuity of one thousand livres. His nephew and heir, le Duc de Mazarin, declined to pay it. Her friends interfered, and the tribunal appealed to confirmed her right to it, and ordered the duke to pay up the arrears, and the interest due upon them.

CHAPTER VII.

A Royal Visitor.—Christina of Sweden.—Chasing the wild Boar.—"Vivat nostra Regina!"—Christina's Abdication.—Christina described in "Cyrus."—A Surprise for the Court.—Christina in Paris.—A Sensation at Compiègne.—Costume of the Queen of Sweden.—At the first Glance, Alarming.—Her personal Appearance.—Finances at a low Ebb.—Departure and Return.—Assassination of Monaldeschi.

RUMOUR reached France in 1656 that the court might shortly expect the honour of a visit from the learned and philosophic queen, Christina of Sweden. She had resigned her crown, abjured the reformed Lutheran faith, and having seen Rome and the head of her new religion, Pope Alexander VII., was anxious to extend her travels to France, and to visit its capital and its king, before finally settling down in the Holy City.

Expectation was naturally on tip-toe, for no woman of the seventeenth century enjoyed a greater reputation for learning and masculine

ability than Christina; and none, probably, in any age, has exemplified more strikingly the folly of attempting to run counter to nature, and to put woman on a level with man. In her training and education, from the early age of four years, an elaborate system was pursued, devised by her father, Gustavus Adolphus, and his minister Oxenstierna. Gustavus was about to join the princes of Northern Germany against the Emperor Ferdinand, in order to aid them in that terrible struggle for religious freedom, now known as the Thirty Years' War. He had no male heir, Christina was his only child; and, should Gustavus fall on the battle-field, as he seemed to anticipate, and the sceptre pass into the hands of a woman, he desired that that woman should be worthy to reign over the gallant and hardy Swedes, and be capable of governing her kingdom with masculine firmness and wisdom, and of carrying out plans and reforms he had greatly at heart.

Two years later, Gustavus was killed at the battle of Lutzen. Soon after, her mother, Elenora of Brandenburg, permanently took up her residence in Denmark, leaving Christina to the care of her aunt, the Princess Katarina, who died while the queen was yet a mere child.

Henceforth, her bringing up was that of a boy—no female occupations, no female instructors. She wore a boy's jacket, furred hat, necktie, and boots; the petticoat of woman was the only concession permitted to the weakness and vanity of the sex. She could shoot either with bow or pistol, with perfect precision and steadiness, and was a skilful and daring horsewoman. To follow the wild boar, the Arctic fox, the bear, and other wild animals, she would plunge recklessly into the dense Swedish forests, often riding for ten successive hours without any apparent fatigue; sometimes—after passing three or four hours of the night in a forester's hut in the woods—remounting at daybreak, quite fresh and lively, to reach Upsala early, for her studies or the affairs of the council chamber. She had all the hardihood and endurance of the Swede, but was not, like Gustavus, robust in appearance.

The rough sports and recreations in which she so frequently indulged, would seem to be quite incompatible with the severe course of study she was supposed to have simultaneously, and with equal diligence, pursued. At the age of eighteen, when the reins of government were given into her hands, we are told that she

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had not only studied the Bible and its Jewish commentators in the original Hebrew, but had read all the ancient Greek and Latin authors, and was able to converse with fluency in both languages. Besides this, she was familiar with every modern tongue, and had examined into every system of philosophy. The Swedes, who, as a nation, had more of the qualities that make brave and hardy soldiers and sailors than philosophers and *littérateurs*, stood amazed at the tales that were told them of the vast learning of their queen. But they appreciated far more her bold riding and driving, her shooting and hunting, and thought her semi-masculine dress very becoming. When she was seen in her sledge, or, with pistols at her saddle-bow, dashing along the streets of Upsala or Lund, the riotous students would call out lustily, "*Vivat nostra regina Christina*," and drink her health, in foaming tankards of beer, in the market-place. She, however, despised the Swedes, and longed for a wider, and more cultured sphere for the display of her great abilities, than the little kingdom she was called to the irksome duty of reigning over.

She declined to be troubled with cares so insignificant, but, *en attendant* an opportune

moment for emancipating herself, she condescended to squander the finances of the state, to give away the crown lands to her favourites, and to the needy professors and poets she induced to visit Stockholm. Descartes died there. A gold chain, and the promise of a pension, prevailed on him in his old age and poverty to undertake a journey to Sweden, and to encounter the rigours of the northern winter. But he had left France for many a year. Its climate he fancied unsuited to the philosophic brain; it was too exciting, inducing a kind of whirl, productive of idle fancies, and flighty notions fatal to sober thought. He therefore left Paris, fled to Holland, where also he could propound his theories with greater freedom. Christina held long arguments with him, and, as she believed, confuted many of his notions.

In 1654 she abdicated, in favour of her cousin Charles, left Sweden immediately, and soon after embraced Catholicism. The Swedes, for the sake of the great Gustavus Adolphus, whose memory they held in high veneration, had been disposed to look leniently on her follies, but her abjuration of his and their religion closed their hearts against her. They never forgave her, and when, some years after, she would have

resumed the crown, they resolutely rejected her.

But the French court was anxiously looking forward to her arrival. She was supposed to know more than the learned members of the French Academy and the doctors of the Sorbonne united. Her ambassador, De la Gardie —on whose useless embassy she had wasted an immense sum of money, in spite of the remonstrances of Oxenstierna and his colleagues—had a few years before, greatly exalted his royal mistress's perfections, for the sake of increasing his own importance and magnifying his office. As fame and her ambassador described her, she is portrayed in "Le Grand Cyrus" under the name of the Princess Cleobuline. And before her visit to Paris, Georges de Scudéry wrote:

> "Christine peut donner des lois
> Aux cœurs des vainqueurs les plus braves,
> Mais la terre a-t-elle des rois
> Qui soient dignes d'être ses esclaves?"

The Duc de Guise was appointed by Mazarin to meet this renowned queen at the frontier, and to conduct her to Paris with all due state and ceremony. A great surprise awaited him. She had no retinue, scarcely any baggage, and her dress was so unlike anything he had seen

before, that he could scarce forbear an exclamation of astonishment. Two women, and two ill-favoured men, accompanied her. We are not told whether they represented ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting, or were merely domestic servants, only that they were so shabbily dressed that the men looked like mendicants, the females like old-clothes women. All pens had been employed in celebrating Christina. The ladies had been told that abstruse sciences, and profound philosophy, were familiar to her as the distaff and the needle were to the generality of her sex. But "renown," remarks Madame de Motteville, "is a great gossip, and one by no means unwilling to overstep the bounds of truth."

It was with some satisfaction, then, that the ladies discovered that this "*reine gothique*" was a woman whose talents and virtues were but of a very ordinary kind, and that, whatever else she might know, she was utterly ignorant of the art of dressing herself either tastefully or becomingly, and had but little regard even for cleanliness. They were also greatly shocked at the evident amusement she derived from the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church; for she had not professed herself a member of it from any conviction that she was turning from

error to embrace religious truth; but, being about to travel and reside among Catholics, she thought to command more respect and homage by professing the same faith. The conversion, as it was termed, of this learned and royal heretic, was greatly vaunted in the Catholic world, and was expected to bring into the true fold a large number of benighted stragglers then wandering in the wilderness of error. But for Christianity, under whatever form it assumed, she had little respect, and, as was said at the time, "*Si elle pratiquait les morales, c'était plutôt par fantaisie que par sentiment.*"

Both the court and the *bourgeoisie* gave her a brilliant reception; but she affected great indifference to everything prepared for her amusement, and found little to admire in what she saw in Paris. She gave the preference to Rome, but said the country was fine and appeared to be well populated. She pronounced the Italian "*comédie à machines*" bad; criticized very freely, and with the air of a *connoisseur*, the collections of pictures that were shown to her. But she liked the banquets, ate with amazing appetite, and talked much and loudly; her voice having the tone of a man's, and her gestures and movements the air of a bold trooper.

Yet while she was a novelty she pleased, for she was vivacious, if rather boisterous, well informed, and fond of displaying her knowledge. She spoke French very well, and understood Latin, but these two languages, together with her mother tongue and the Italian she had learnt in Rome, were the extent of her linguistic accomplishments.

The queen, and the young king and his brother were at Compiègne. It was made a point of etiquette that Christina—travelling without any of the showy trappings and encumbrances that royalty then was so fond of, though not *incognita*—should go thither and visit them, after the cardinal had done the honours in Paris. Accordingly, after having made a short sojourn in the capital, and gone the round of the *salons*—receiving and affording the most amusement *chez* Ninon and Scarron, and being both pleased and edified at Mademoiselle de Scudéry's —she set out alone for Compiègne. Great was the sensation she caused there, and probably intended to cause; for the more she affected the Amazon and disregarded conventionalities, the more she imagined she proclaimed her superiority over the elegant and frivolous "feminities" who did not aspire to be more than women, and

proved herself a worthy daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus.

Her appearance so strongly resembled that of a wandering gipsy—for during her travels in the sunny south she had taken no care to preserve her complexion, and her skin had become much tanned—that the delicately-strung nerves of Anne of Austria received quite a shock when the outlandish-looking object, ushered into her presence with such extraordinary ceremony, was announced as the Queen of Sweden. Instead of her own fair hair, plaited and hanging loosely on her shoulders—as when Whitelocke, Cromwell's ambassador, saw her—Christina had promoted herself to the dignity of a wig, and the wig was of black hair, and in fashion such as the men of that period were accustomed to adorn themselves with. It was high, and full frizzed in front, large and bushy at the sides, whence it fell low in narrow points. Apparently, it had been well powdered and pomaded before she left Paris; but she had had breezy weather on her journey, and the wind had taken great liberties with her wig, tossing its curls hither and thither, and tumbling them together in wild dishevelment. The back of this strange *coiffure*, so manly in front, had a frizzy arrangement, in

imitation of the manner in which women then wore their hair.

Her bodice, or corset, was cut to resemble a man's jacket, her under garment was drawn out between the bodice and the petticoat, as the men then wore their shirts, and there was the same kind of puffing out of linen at the end of the sleeves. The broad linen collar was merely fastened with a pin, and was put on all awry. A piece of black riband was tied round her neck. The ladies then wore long flowing trains, but Christina's short grey skirt, with narrow bands of silver and gold braiding, just cleared her ankles and displayed her boots, which in form and material were the same as men's. As the head of a military nation, she thought herself entitled to wear a soldier's hat; and to trail a sword at her side.

Madame de Motteville confesses that, at the first glance, Christina was alarming; but on the eye becoming reconciled to her fantastic costume, neither it nor the wearer was displeasing. She could be very agreeable when she desired to make a favourable impression; readily penetrated into the character and feelings of those about her, and *pro tem.* adapted her conversation and manners to them. In France, her fluency

in the language served to reconcile many to her eccentricities. The king and his brother were first presented to her as private gentlemen, but she had seen their portraits in Paris, and remarked to Mazarin that "those young gentlemen had the air of princes born to a throne." Louis was then eighteen, but he shrank from conversing with her; his ignorance was so profound, and her reputation for learning so overwhelming.

In personal appearance, Christina is described as below the middle height, full chested, but not perfect in figure, one shoulder being higher than the other, a defect she contrived partly to conceal by the oddity of her dress. Her hands were considered well-formed, but were generally too dirty to be attractive; they were large also, and, unlike the "*mains mignonnes*" of Anne of Austria, had been roughly used in manly sports and exercises. Her face was large, but its contour good; her nose aquiline; her mouth not unpleasing, but not small enough for beauty, and her teeth tolerably even. She had very fine eyes; bright, full of expression and vivacity, and searching in their glances. Though much sunburnt, and bearing traces of the small-pox, her complexion was not bad; so that, on the

whole, though not handsome, she was probably rather good-looking, and at the time referred to she was in her thirtieth year.

But the court soon grew weary of her, and she found its etiquette oppressive. She laughed at the *menuet* and other stately dances, and at the *fadeur* of the conversation of the queen and her ladies. She was soon acquainted with all the scandal of Paris, commented on it freely, and was not unsparing of oaths and jests that were shocking to ears polite. She, however, seemed greatly inclined to give Paris the preference to her much-vaunted Rome for her abode. But, alas! funds were wanting; and one object of her visit seems to have been to claim a sum of money which at the Peace of Westphalia it was stipulated that France was to pay to Sweden. A promise only of payment was given; for it was desired that Christina should leave Paris, and to facilitate her plans, Mazarin's palace at Rome was ordered to be prepared for her reception.

Christina at length felt compelled to take her departure, and a sum of 200,000 livres was then paid to her by the cardinal.

In the following year she announced another visit to France, and Fontainebleau was assigned

to her; but she was not invited to return to Paris. While at Fontainebleau there occurred that mysterious event, the assassination, by her order, of Monaldeschi. The nature of his treachery and the kind of confidence she reposed in him, have never been fully ascertained. She was fond of meddling in the political affairs of Europe, and once or twice offered her mediation to obtain a settlement of state differences, but it was never accepted.

Gui Patin, the author of some satires and gossiping memoirs little to be relied upon, asserted that Christina had discovered that Monaldeschi served Mazarin as a spy on her actions, and had betrayed her political secrets to him. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, with whom, though in disgrace, Christina was more intimate than with most ladies of the court, has said, that of the two Italians the queen had with her, Sentanelli and Monaldeschi, the former appeared to stand higher than the latter in her favour and confidence; but that Monaldeschi, whom he had supplanted, being exceedingly annoyed and jealous, to revenge himself set reports afloat injurious to her honour, and that Christina, in high indignation, ordered his assassination. Madame de Motte-

ville confirms this view of the mysterious and tragical occurrence.

Whatever the motive, the deed has been a blot on the character and fame of the Swedish queen. No one was found to justify her but Leibnitz. She was, in fact, amenable to the laws of France for murder; but the law closed its ears to the report, though, at the same time, Christina was made to understand that she could not again be received at the court of France, and, that therefore she must at once leave the kingdom. She returned directly to Rome.* Pope Alexander VII. allowed her a pension of 12,000 scudi; and as she managed her pecuniary affairs so ill, he deputed Cardinal Azzolini to regulate them for her. She resided in Rome twenty-five years, and employed herself in writing several works, and in collecting *objets d'art.*

Her visit to the French court was long remembered, and her eccentric sayings and doings were often the theme of lively conversation there. Christina liberally patronized literature, science, and art. To Mademoiselle de Scudéry she often wrote, and sent her valuable presents.

* The insolent letter said to have been written by her on this occasion to "Jules Mazarin," is now known to be a forgery.

CHAPTER VIII.

Madame de Caylus.—Reminiscences of the Fronde.—Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu.—Ruelles and Alcoves.—La Marquise de Sablé.—A Disciple of D'Urfé.—A faithless Knight.—Dismissed by his Lady-love.—The Port Royal Salon.—"Maximes et Pensées."—La Rochefoucauld's Philosophy.—Les "Lettres Provinciales."—Blaise Pascal.—Maximes de Madame de Sablé.

ADAME DE CAYLUS, the niece of Madame de Maintenon, attributes, in her "Souvenirs," the supposed aversion of Louis XIV. to her aunt, in the early days of his acquaintance with her, to a suspicion that she was a "*précieuse*" of the Rambouillet school. She was a frequenter—at that time, as a humble friend—of the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu. But, though imitating Rambouillet, they had neither the same influence in society, nor included in their circle (the guests of one being, with few exceptions, the guests of the other) the wit, learning, and distinction which made the *salon* of the Mar-

quise de Rambouillet celebrated above all others.

It is very probable that the term "*préciosité*," or, indeed, any other signifying a respect for morals or decency of conduct, would be offensive to a man so thoroughly dissolute as Louis XIV. But it is yet more probable, that to revive the memories of the Fronde was to him a greater offence. The name of Scarron reminded him that he had been obliged to fly from Paris, and had re-entered it only when it pleased the people to invite him; that his throne had been so thoroughly shaken, that he had very nearly been shaken from it, during that memorable struggle — which, to please him, the servile band of worshipping courtiers, when the threatened danger was past, ridiculed and made a jest of.

The widow of the witty pamphleteer and satirist—whether or not a professed "*précieuse*" in her principles—was then too insignificant a person for "Glorious Apollo" to bestow any thought upon. But her frequent, and importunate solicitations for a pension, annoyed him excessively. He tore up her petitions and tossed them from him, exclaiming, "Shall I never hear the last of this widow

Scarron?" And, persistent as she was, she would not have succeeded in her object (for her friends of the hôtels did not aid her), had not the reigning favourite of the royal harem done her the friendly turn to take up her cause and plead it for her. So long as she bore the name of Scarron, Louis was not reconciled to her — good nurse though she proved to his illegitimate children; but when she became Madame de Maintenon, then her arts began readily to take effect on him.

Madame de Montespan was a constant visitor at the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu, but found it no barrier to her elevation as *maîtresse en titre*. It was there her acquaintance with Madame Scarron was formed. Those hôtels were presided over by ladies of less distinguished literary and artistic tastes than the Marquise de Rambouillet, whom they imitated, chiefly, in cultivating sociability. Just as the ladies of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and even those of far inferior pretensions, followed the fashion introduced by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and set apart some hours of an appointed day in each week for receiving their friends; thus promoting that taste for social intercourse, inherent in the French of all classes. If all

had not *salons*, all could receive in their *ruelles* —the space between the bed and the wall—and it was a custom of very old date to do so. Henry IV., whom, unless the gout held him fast by the leg—which it sometimes did—one would hardly suspect of so indolent a proceeding, transacted business of state, with Sully and others, in the right-hand *ruelle*, and received the visits of his intimate friends in the left.

Generally, there was but one *ruelle*, for turning from side to side must have been fatiguing. The indolent Anne of Austria, who passed so much of her life in bed, held very merry, chatty parties in her *ruelle;* and all ladies did the same. Alcoves, as before observed, were introduced from Spain by the dignified Marquise de Rambouillet, and not merely for closing up a bed, but as being better suited than the *ruelle* for cosy conversation. If an obscure *précieuse* received in a *ruelle* the homage of her *adorateurs platoniques*, *les grandes dames* also received in their *ruelles*, friends of the sterner sex. But the purely literary coteries of the *précieuses*, had for object, besides the pleasure of a social *réunion*, discussion on the improvement of the language. We know, that, in their zeal for excessive refinement in language and man-

ners, they often overstepped the limits of good taste, and, in their endeavour to accomplish some desirable changes, introduced not a few affectations. Yet, if there were "*précieuses ridicules*," there were also "*précieuses illustres.*"

The true successor of Madame de Rambouillet was the Marquise de Sablé, who, above all others, was then distinguished in society for what were then understood as "*grande politesse*," and "*parfaite distinction.*" She was a highly finished specimen of *une grande dame* of the Rambouillet school. No longer young, but extremely well-preserved, and always elegantly and tastefully dressed, she was still much admired in the maturity of her beauty. Her smooth skin had no trace of small-pox, a disease she had lived much in dread of, and had happily escaped, by constantly and carefully guarding against the chances of taking it. Her fear of death, under any form, is said to have been extreme, in her youth; frequently causing deep depression of spirit. But as the time for leaving the world drew nearer, her love for it declined; she became gradually reconciled to bidding an eternal adieu to its pains and its pleasures, its cares and its vanities, and, at last, with the poet François Mainard, was able to say:

"Las d'espérer, et de me plaindre
Des muses, des grands, et du sort,
C'est ici que j'attends la mort,
Sans la désirer ni la craindre."

Her disposition was a happy combination of many agreeable qualities; she possessed much goodness of heart, with liveliness and wit, tempered by piety. She was of noble birth, being the daughter of Gilles de Sauvré, Marquis de Courtenvaux. Left a widow at an early age, she determined to contract no second marriage; for, being a diligent student of "Astrée," she was deeply imbued with those ideal and chivalric notions of love which prevailed at Rambouillet, and had greatly contributed to diffuse the taste for that high-flown sentimentality. Love, according to her idea, which was, indeed, but the idea of D'Urfé and the Spanish romancists—from whom Corneille borrowed the subjects of his plays, and imbibed similar views of *la grande passion*—must be both pure and passionate; the lover must worship his mistress; must pay her the most respectful homage, and his happiness must be that she will deign to receive it.

In her youth Madame de Sablé had laid it down as an axiom, that "woman was created

to be the ornament of the world, and to receive the adoration of man." Later on in life, she did not insist that it actually was so, in the degenerate age in which her lot was cast, but, that such was originally the Creator's beneficent intention. Since then, man had become disloyal, not only to woman, but to himself, and the high destiny which had at first been assigned to all mankind, had become the happy lot but of few.

When she was Mdlle. de Sauvré, her *beau idéal* of a perfect cavalier was the Maréchal Duc de Montmorenci—one of the handsomest men of his day, and brave to temerity—who was beheaded at Toulouse in 1636, having joined the timid and irresolute Gaston d'Orleans in a plot against Richelieu. But Mdlle. de Sauvré had then ceased to receive his homage. He had been her "*galant et honnête homme*," according to the honourable and respectful manner then in vogue, and she had rewarded him with smiles and blushes, indicating (so it was thought) almost too tender a feeling on her part. Montmorenci, faithless knight, had, however, presumed to raise his eyes to Anne of Austria, and to heave a deep sigh as he again cast them languidly to earth. The queen—

"*pieuse et galante*"—like Mdlle. de Sauvré, also deigned to reward the handsome cavalier with a smile and a blush. The lady to whom he had sworn fealty, being informed of his infidelity, summoned him to her presence; not to reproach him, but to dismiss him for ever, with the stigma of disloyalty on his conscience. Admiration, if shared with the greatest princess in the world, could be but displeasing to her. These platonic sentimentalities were the fashion, and no one more piqued himself upon them than *triste* Louis XIII.

But the widowed Marquise de Sablé, arrived at that uncertain, yet unpleasantly advanced, period of life called middle age, was a far less romantic person. She was now more occupied with the care of her health, the salvation of her soul, and the amusement of her mind with polite literature, as well as the enlivening of the quiet routine of her life, by assembling around her the aristocratic and refined society she had so long been accustomed to. She had built herself a residence within the precincts of Port Royal de Paris, but quite distinct from the monastery. There she received a distinguished circle of the *noblesse* and the *literati*, after the manner of the Hôtel de Ram-

bouillet, with whose traditions she was perfectly acquainted. It was the re-establishment of the *salon bleu* in miniature, subdued, too, by the shadow of a shade of soft religious light. There was less space, but the same exquisite taste in arrangement; the same refinement and good breeding in the company. The conversation was sparkling and witty, the prevailing tone decidedly gallant. For although the model hostess was devout, even to the extent of occasionally secluding herself from the world for a day or two, yet her devotion, like herself and her surroundings, had an elegance in it, unmarred by the slightest tinge of severity.

The Marquise de Sablé no longer visited the court. Her tinge of Jansenism would, probably, have caused her to be less well received there than formerly; yet she kept on excellent terms with her friends of all shades of theological and political opinion. Religion and politics were tabooed subjects in her *salon;* but she was fond of recording, in the form of a *maxime,* or *pensée,* the result of her reflections on her varied experiences of the chequered scenes of life. In this way originated the "Maximes et Pensées" of La Rochefoucauld, who was one of her most intimate friends. It

was she who suggested that species of literature, and gave the first impulse to it; and while portraits were the rage with the Luxembourg circle, maxims were in high vogue in the Port Royal *salon*, whence they spread to that of Madame La Fayette and of La Rochefoucauld.

The *maximes* and *pensées* were handed about, turned, and re-turned; a trait of wit added, or a drop of acid poured in. All who frequented the Port Royal *salon* were expected to make, or to assist in making, them. La Rochefoucauld, writing to Madame de Sablé, says: "*Voilà tout ce que j'ai de maximes. Mais comme on ne fait rien pour rien, je vous demande un potage aux carottes, un ragoût de mouton*," etc. Excellent in everything, the *cuisine* of her, establishment was noted for its *recherche*, and she liked, *en tête-à-tête*, or *parti carré*, that her friends should partake with her of her *petits plats exquis*.

At another time, La Rochefoucauld would lay several sentences before the assembled circle, who criticized and discussed them, and made observations on their construction, by which he often profited, and greatly improved them. The bitter or acid tone which marks them, is, however, supposed to be rarely due to

any one but himself. Thus were the greater part of those *tristes* and cynical "Maximes et Pensées" composed. Huet says, that many of them are due to Madame de La Fayette, who lived on terms of very close intimacy with the surly egotist, and devoted herself entirely to him in his latter years. She writes, with reference to this friendship: "*Il m'a donné de l'esprit, et j'ai réformé son cœur.*" But of *esprit* she had abundance of her own, and he had no heart to reform.

The "Maximes" have been generally considered false and commonplace, in theory; and to a great extent, no doubt, they are, or the world would be a more heartless and dreary one than it actually is. Rochefoucauld depicted himself in them, and as he was a keen observer, he saw, probably, in the course of his life that there were very many in the world not unlike him. They owe much of their reputation to his style, which is sententious and vigorous. Their piquancy lies less in the maxims, or thoughts themselves, than in the manner in which their malice is developed. Indeed, as a writer, La Rochefoucauld takes a very high place; as a philosopher, few allow him any merit, or even the claim to be ranked as one.

The author of the famous "Lettres Provinciales" was another celebrity of the Jansenist *salon* of the Marquise de Sablé. He, too, was fain to contribute his quota of maxims to the general budget. Influenced, probably, by the gentle and genial disposition of the lady, his mood was less severe, when his pen was employed to gratify her, than when it traced those *pensées* that were intended as the preparation for a work, in which he proposed to prove the truth of the Christian religion. Pascal wrote for Madame de Sablé:

"*Toutes les sottises et les injustices que je ne fais pas m'emeuvent la bile.*

"*Un peu de bon temps, un bon-mot, une louange, une caresse, me tirent d'une profonde tristesse donc je n'ai pu me tirer par aucun effort de méditation. Quelle machine que mon âme! Quel abîme de misère et de faiblesse!*"

Pascal was the most eloquent of the prose writers of the middle of the seventeenth century. His "Lettres Provinciales," addressed to the Jesuits in defence of the Jansenists—when the disputes respecting the five heretical propositions of Jansenius were agitating Rome, and the religious world of France—are in force of style, and purity of language, models of fine writing

and eloquent irony. The consciousness of powerful genius occasionally appears in the slightly arbitrary tone of some of the *pensées*. In the work which was to be based on them—but which his premature death in his thirty-ninth year prevented him from entering upon—he proposed to show that the Christian religion is not contrary to reason; that it is venerable—both inspiring and conferring respect; that it is so gentle and amiable one would wish it to be true; that it is holy, from its grandeur and elevation, and that, as it promises mankind the truest good and happiness, it is worthy of the highest veneration and love. Pascal's genius developed itself early, and early he was taken away. His career is interesting; but, as it is generally known, need not be enlarged upon here.

Madame de Sablé did not put her own "Maximes et Pensées" into print. If she produced any that were *piquantes* or worthy of being preserved, they were probably included amongst those of La Rochefoucauld. A few exist in private papers and letters of the time. Victor Cousin, in his "Femmes illustres," gives the following as Madame de Sablé's:

"*Il y à un certain empire dans la manière de*

parler et dans les actions, qui se fait faire place partout, et qui gagne par avance la considération et le respect.

"*Le comment faire la meilleure partie des choses, et l'air qu'on leur donne, dore, accommode, et adoucit les plus fâcheuses.*

"*Être trop mécontent de soi est une faiblesse; être trop content de soi, une sottise.*"

They are neither very witty nor profound, but they are characteristic of their author.

CHAPTER IX.

The King's Illness.—The Quack and the Court Physicians.—Mazarin flatters Cromwell.—Début of Molière in "L'Etourdi."—La Troupe de Monsieur.—Les Précieuses et les Pecques.—Life of a Provincial Actor.—Molière's Prose Plays.—"Les Jansénistes d'Amour."

THE king was twenty years of age, and still the government remained entirely in the hands of Mazarin. He now ruled France despotically, though, once again he had prepared for flight, as well as for carrying with him the enormous wealth he had fraudulently amassed. It was when the king fell ill in Calais, whither the cardinal had taken him while the English and French troops, commanded by Turenne, were fighting the Spaniards in Flanders. For some days the death of Louis was fully expected, and all eyes were turned towards Philippe, Monsieur. The courtiers flattered the young prince, and the spirit of the

Fronde revived in cabals against "le Mazarin." In the last extremity, a provincial quack, in repute for the cures he had effected, was sent for from Abbeville to see the royal patient. Having examined him, he confidently announced that "*le beau garçon, quoique bien malade n'en mourroit pas,*" and, forthwith, proceeded to administer remedies that horrified the court physicians, but put the king out of danger, and soon restored him to health. The courtiers no longer bestowed their attentions on Philippe, and a few sentences of banishment broke up the Parisian cabal against the cardinal.

He now thought it high time to marry the king, and applied for the hand of Maria Theresa of Spain. It did not then suit the views of Philip IV. to give his daughter to Louis XIV., who, on his part, after several *amours passagers*, seemed to have become seriously attached to little, fat, ugly Maria Mancini. She had been asked in marriage by Prince Charles Stuart (Charles II.). But his fortunes were then at a very low ebb, and his proposal was of course rejected. Mazarin was, at that time, complimenting and courting "*le plus grand homme du monde,*" as he termed Cromwell, with whom France was then in alliance, and to whom Dun-

querque—the stipulated price for the aid of his troops in expelling the Spaniards from Flanders —had just been delivered over; the cardinal having vainly tried to evade fulfilling the arrangement. He is said to have desired to marry his niece to Richard Cromwell; but when, after Cromwell's death, the tide unexpectedly turned, Mazarin became willing that Maria should be Queen of England. Charles, however, then declined to entertain the overtures made to him. It seems doubtful whether Louis really had so much love for Maria Mancini as to wish to make her his wife; but, at all events, their parting, though one of weeping and sighing to her, was not, apparently, very grievous to him.

If he did feel a slight passing pang, he found balm in abundance to soothe it, in the shape of gross flattery that he loved so well, and which was so eagerly administered to him by his courtiers. And it was more soothing still when it fell from the lips of the admiring, if frivolous circle of ladies, who composed the court of Anne of Austria, and of whose conversation and society he was exceedingly fond. Mazarin, too, who sought to hold him in leading-strings as long as it was possible, contrived to keep up a

perpetual round of pleasures for his amusement, and an endless succession of *fêtes* and *ballets*, operas, plays, etc.

Louis read with exceeding delight the romances of Mademoiselle de Scudéry — the "*grande galanterie*" of her heroes being especially pleasing to him—and also made himself acquainted with the tragedies of Corneille. These he read with the Connetable Colonne, a man of culture and *esprit*, who afterwards married Maria Mancini. Corneille, at this time, had essayed a lighter pen, in comedy, and "Le Menteur" had appeared when Molière made his *début* in Paris, as an actor and a dramatist, in his first play of "L'Étourdi." He played before the king and the court, and at once established himself in the favour of Louis. His *troupe* was named the "Troupe de Monsieur," and performed at the Petit Bourbon.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, throwing up the study of the law, began at the age of twenty-five the career of an actor. At first he played only as an amateur; then, adopting the stage as a profession, took the name of Molière, and joined the company of strollers calling themselves "L'illustre Théâtre," his aim being to perfect himself in the provinces. After

an absence of twelve years he returned to Paris, a finished comedian, and with the reputation—founded on the success of "L'Étourdi" at Lyon—of a most promising dramatist. "Le dépit Amoureux," which followed "L'Étourdi," confirmed the favourable impression already made, and the "Troupe de Monsieur" threw quite into the shade the other company of players, then performing in Paris, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. From his long sojourn in the provinces, and the nature of his profession—which necessitated frequent appeals for protection and patronage to the *petite noblesse*, and rich *bourgeoisie*, of the various towns he and his companions temporarily abode in—Molière, keen in his observation of character, had become thoroughly acquainted with the manners, the excessive pretensions, and assumption of airs of exceeding refinement, then prevailing in the coteries of provincial magnates, who were styled *pecques* or *précores* in Parisian circles.

"Les Précieuses ridicules" was produced in the second year of Molière's establishment in Paris. He was a slow writer, and the play had probably been for some time in preparation, its object—as many French writers suppose—being to hold up to ridicule the extreme affectation,

both in manners and language, of the *pecques.* The Hôtel de Rambouillet had been closed to society for more than fifteen years, and Molière had never frequented it. The *salons* open to a social circle in 1659, in the hôtels of *les grands seigneurs et grandes dames,* were not generally literary or very remarkable for refinement. Those of La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Sablé, were the exceptions, and approached much nearer than others to the literary and social distinction of Rambouillet.

The great difference between the first *salon* and its imitators was the difference in the ladies that presided over and gave the tone to them. The marquise never had a successor worthy of being compared with her. Her great appreciation of genius and talent, her own accomplishments, high moral principles, and genial, social disposition, were the great attractions in the days of her youth, and the early years of Rambouillet. In its second period, a charming family had grown up around her, and while she had increased in matronly dignity, but remained kindly and cheerful as before, the society had become neither staid nor pretentious. For then, the graceful Julie, the coquettish Claire, and the spirited young Marquis

de Pisani, together with their companions, the youthful members of the *haute noblesse*, and the general circle formed a happy *mélange* of genius and learning, liveliness, wit, youth, and beauty; assembled for pleasant conversation, learned discussion, or mirthful amusement, without the then usual alloy of grossness and ill manners.

The life of a provincial actor—especially at a period when coarseness and depravity, even in the higher ranks of society, were general—was little calculated to inspire respect for the decencies of speech and conduct. Molière had none. And the *précieuses* at this time, in their zeal to oppose the prevailing corruption, and to offer an example of delicacy of taste and sentiment, of urbanity of manners and refinement in language, fell into the error of carrying all this to the extreme of affectation, and rendering ridiculous a commendable intention. Molière availed himself (so it has been suggested) of this fatal mistake to name his play "Les Précieuses ridicules"—his satire on his provincial patrons serving also for a satirical attack on the *précieuses* of the capital. This may be an erroneous view of the question, but Roederer—who thoroughly studied that period, and especially all that relates to Rambouillet

and *les précieuses*—is of opinion that Molière has been misunderstood. He conceives that his sarcasm was aimed at the affectations and hypocrisy of the "*pécores provinciales et bourgeoises*," and that if he succeeded in purging the language of some of their ridiculous forms of expression, the credit of banishing both from it, and from manners, the grossness, obscenity, and shameless effrontery Molière encouraged, is due to the illustrious women of the Rambouillet school and their successors.

The Duc de Montausier's twelve years' devotion to Julie d'Angennes is supposed to be referred to in the theory of Cathos ("Précieuses ridicules"), but when it is explained that the duc was a Calvinist, the passage loses its point. If Madolon be meant for Madeleine, the portrait bears no resemblance to her. The "Précieuses" was not in verse. Some persons prefer Molière's prose plays, yet it is probable that his plays would have been less generally known had all been written in prose—his versification being easy, and his meaning clearly and naturally expressed, so that the mind readily receives and retains the impression he would convey to it, while the flowing rhymes linger long in the memory.

Molière was well received in the *salon* of Ninon, which was then frequented by the most brilliant and *spirituel* society in Paris. As she advanced in years her reputation increased. Ninon had become too familiar an epithet; she was now Mademoiselle de Lenclos, *une femme d'esprit*, and a person of great consideration. In her *salon* Molière may have acquired his knowledge of the "Précieuses," for of the fashionable follies, amusements, or vices of the capital he would have known nothing, while in the provinces; as no newspapers then carried, daily, minute particulars of all that was going on in Paris to every part of France. Ninon had wittily said of the *précieuses* that they were "*Les Jansénistes d'amour*," and the *mot* had found favour. The gentle Jansenism of Madame de Sablé tolerated all that conduced to render existence pleasant; but the pure Jansenism of Port Royal des Champs was as intolerant of pleasures and amusements as Calvinism itself, and, particularly, it inveighed against the theatre. Between Molière and the Jansenists there was therefore a natural antipathy, like that between the king and the *précieuses*, as representatives of the Jansenism of love.

CHAPTER X.

Distress in France.—The Treaty of the Pyrenees.—The Restoration of Charles II.—Maria Theresa of Spain.—Bridal Cortége of Louis XIV.—The Cardinal-Minister.—Hercules in Love.—Parental Authority of Mazarin.—Return of Condé and Les Frondeurs.—Madame de Scudéry.—Scarron.—Death of Mazarin.—Affected Grief of Louis XIV.

HE year 1659 was one of distress and suffering in France to those who had to bear the burden of taxation. Mazarin's fraudulent measures for enriching himself made it ever increasingly oppressive, and every one's cash-box was empty save that of the all-powerful minister. When the king wanted a little pocket-money, and applied for it to the *surintendant des finances*, that very amiable functionary would reply, "Sire, there is no money in your majesty's coffers, but Monsieur le Cardinal will lend you some."

Besides the necessity for supplying by some means the urgently-pressed wants of the king,

large sums were still needed for carrying on the war with Spain. The country, however, sighed for peace, and as its finances were exhausted, Mazarin's wishes and views were in sympathy with it. The result was the famous treaty of the Pyrenees. The cardinal, in person, concluded it with Don Louis de Haro, after some months had been spent in settling the important question of precedency; for the cardinals claimed equality with kings, and the cardinal-minister of France (which assumed to be pre-eminent among the nations of Europe) was not disposed on such an occasion to abate one tittle of his pretensions. As his power was now greater than even that of Richelieu had been, so the once *doux* and, when expedient, humble Mazarin, now displayed greater magnificence and regal state than his arrogant and tyrannical predecessor had done.

During the conferences of the French and Spanish plenipotentiaries, Prince Charles Stuart —who hoped that some clause favourable to himself might be introduced into the treaty, now Cromwell was dead—vainly endeavoured to obtain an interview with either. They not only declined to discuss his claims, but even to admit him to their august presence. The French

court had gone into mourning for Cromwell—Charles's prospect of ever reigning in England being considered a hopeless one. Yet before the treaty of peace was signed, and the arrangements for the marriage of the king, by proxy, with Maria Theresa of Spain were completed, Richard Cromwell had given up the Protectorship, and Charles was firmly seated on the English throne.

Notwithstanding the emptiness of the exchequer, the preparations in Paris for the public entry of the bride and bridegroom were on a scale more extensive and magnificent than any that the inhabitants of the old city had hitherto witnessed. A triumphal arch, of which Claude Perrault gave the design, was erected at the end of the Avenue de Vincennes. The Porte St. Antoine was entirely rebuilt, and elaborately sculptured. Anne of Austria, who forty-five years before had passed along the same *route* — a girl-bride with her boy-husband — was now seated at one of the windows of the Hôtel de Beauvais in the Rue St. Antoine, wrapped in "*une mante noire*," to witness the entry of the triumphal *cortége* of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa, her niece. The young queen was of the same age as the king—twenty-two.

She was not beautiful, but was gentle and amiable, and in appearance very youthful, from the childlike slightness of her figure and her diminutive height.

Those monstrosities, very high head-dresses (*coiffures étagées*) and very high-heeled shoes, were introduced to give her an air of more importance; but as all the ladies of her court wore them, her want of dignity, from the insignificance of her person, was none the less apparent. The contrast between the figure of the little timid queen-consort and that of the Juno-like queen-mother was very striking and not favourable to the former. Her knowledge of French was exceedingly limited, and it does not appear that she ever acquired any great fluency in it. Louis had attempted, when the marriage was definitively arranged, to make some acquaintance with Spanish, but had not been very successful. The habits of idleness he had been brought up in had indisposed his mind to study, and he was incapable of that sustained attention and application necessary to become master of a language.

Attended by a numerous suite, Louis set out to receive his bride at the frontier, and the marriage was solemnized on the 9th of June,

1660. On the 26th of August, they made their public entry. Maria Theresa, arrayed in white satin and wearing a profusion of pearls, looked a very interesting pretty little girl as she reclined on the cushions of a magnificently painted and gilded triumphal car. It was lined with rich crimson velvet, and numberless sculptured and gilded loves, doves, and cupids were grouped around it. A royal mantle of violet velvet, lined with white satin and embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis* in pearls and gold, was tastefully arranged on her shoulders, and partially covered her *petite personne*. She carried a superb Moorish fan. Her Spanish gloves were splendidly embroidered, and had tassels of pearls, and a veil or mantilla of transparent gold blonde shaded her face. Beside the car rode Louis XIV., a fine young man with a very grand air, and, at a short distance, handsome. The small-pox had slightly damaged the smoothness of his skin and clearness of complexion. This horrible disease had attacked him in his childhood, but with less virulence than too frequently was the case at that period; so that though traces of it were visible in his face, they had not produced any actual disfigurement.

Louis' dress rivalled in magnificence that of his bride. His coat was of cloth of gold, covered with black lace. Ruffles and collar of white point-lace, of the most exquisite fineness; embroidered gloves; a diamond-hilted sword; and a plumed hat, looped with a diamond that glittered like a star of the first magnitude. Boots of embroidered leather, and gold spurs elaborately wrought; a charger that pranced and curvetted and seemed as proud as its rider, and was no less richly caparisoned. A brilliant retinue followed; *grands seigneurs* all of them, and their dress similar to that of the king. Not the least grand part of the show was the cardinal-minister, in a splendid carriage — the panels painted by Le Brun, whom Fouquet then patronized. A company of *mousquetaires* escorted him, riding on either side of his carriage, his own guards following. He was even more meagre than when he set out for the Pyrenees. He looked careworn and anxious, and there was a feverish glitter in his deep-set Italian eyes.

Surrounded by all the trappings of royalty, he excited considerable attention, more indeed than seemed to be agreeable to him—perhaps a thought of the Fronde flashed across his mind,

and a reminiscence of "*À bas le Mazarin!*" echoed in his ears. But all such cries were at an end, and the throng in the streets was an admiring one, without a thought of sedition.

"*Dieu! quel joli garçon!*" exclaimed the women, who pushed and scrambled to have a good look at the king as he passed.

"*Ah!*" said another, "*que cette petite femme doit être heureuse!*"

"*Que le Mazarin a l'air malade,*" whispered one man to another with bated breath, but with a gleam of joy on his countenance.

And thus the bridal *cortége* passed on to the Louvre.*

A succession of *fêtes* and entertainments followed. Molière and his troupe performed before the bridal party; but the principal theatrical entertainment was the Italian opera of "Ercole Amante." Italian artists came from Italy, by Mazarin's order, for its representation. Between the acts were *ballets*, arranged with reference to the subject of the opera, and which were danced by the king and queen and

* In a letter of Madame Scarron to a friend, she describes the bridal procession at some length. She was amongst the crowd of spectators, and it was on this occasion that (according to the idea of Roederer) she fell in love with the king.

the ladies and gentlemen of the court. The Abbé Milani sang one of the principal parts of the opera, and two French *artistes*, Mesdemoiselles St. Hilaire, and La Barre, made their *débuts* in it. "Ercole Amante" was the first opera played in France with an overture.

Philippe, Monsieur, during these bridal *fêtes* had taken a great fancy (one can hardly accuse him of falling in love) to the lively Henriette d'Angleterre, sister of Charles II. He desired to marry her; but Mazarin so strongly opposed it that Philippe was obliged to yield. So much had Anne of Austria brought up her sons in blind obedience to the will of the cardinal, that, from habit, they continued to allow him to exercise the authority of a father over them, while she fretted under the yoke she had prepared for herself, and now was unable to throw off. The king at times displayed a little impatience of control, but wanted resolution to make the necessary effort to be free. Knowing that he could not be king while the cardinal lived, he turned again to his pleasures, and displayed his fine figure in the grave dances of "*les ballets sérieux;*" his dexterity in *les courses de bagues*, in the grounds of the Palais Royal, and his

taste for magnificence and display, in the grand *carrousels* in the court of the Louvre.

1660 was an eventful year to France. The great Condé returned to his country, as by the Treaty of the Pyrenees it was stipulated that he should be allowed to do, together with all the *Frondeurs* then in banishment who had been compromised by joining in his rebellion. Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, died at Blois about this time; but his daughter, la Grande Mademoiselle, and *les dames Frondeuses* received permission again to appear at court. Madame la Princesse was dead, also the Duc de Longueville; and the duchess was living in strict retirement at a distant estate. When Mademoiselle paid her first visit to the court, Anne of Austria received her with a great show of affection, and presented her herself to the king. "*Voilà!*" she said, "*une demoiselle qui a été bien méchante, mais qui promet d'être bien sage à l'avenir.*" The king then embraced her. "I ought to throw myself at your feet!" exclaimed Mademoiselle. "I rather should throw myself at yours, my cousin," replied the king, "when I hear you speak thus." Many more compliments followed, *de part et d'autre*, and thus they were reconciled, or affected to be.

Georges de Scudéry, with his wife and son, also reappeared in Paris, and made his peace with the court. His wife's relative, the Duc de St. Aignan, presented him to the king, who, in consideration of his literary renown, which at one time had rivalled that of Corneille, gave him a pension, and conferred a benefice on his son, a child of five, already destined for the Church. Georges survived but a few years longer. His widow, still young, was well received and much esteemed in society. She wrote those pretty *bagatelles* in verse, then so greatly in favour and fashion, and was lively and witty, and distinguished for her elegance of manner.

Poor Scarron also was dead, and, according to De Beaumelle and other writers, the piety of his wife had so much influence upon him, that he died in the odour of sanctity. Madame Scarron was, therefore, as successful in turning her poor crippled scapegrace from the error of his ways, and saving his soul, as was Madame de Maintenon in bringing about the same happy result in the case of her magnificent bashaw.

The changes that had occurred in society, the reconciliations effected, the deaths that had taken place, the many new names that were rising into notice in literature, in the

arts, etc.—all seemed to announce the dawn of a new era in France. In 1661 the health of Mazarin gradually declined; he was worn out by the cares, anxieties, and agitation of mind he had undergone during the last eight years, in order securely to retain the reins of government, while he heaped up wealth, of which he had little enjoyment, except, perhaps, in the pleasure of amassing it. He was anxious about it at the last: and, as if to stamp with legal right his possession of such enormous wealth, he determined to run the risk of presenting it wholly to the king. Louis accepted the gift, and the cardinal remained in miserable suspense for three whole days, trembling lest the ill-gotten treasure should be irrecoverably lost to his family. Those three days must have seemed to him as long as three years; but at the end of them, Louis decided to restore the gift.

On the 9th of March, 1661, Mazarin died. His exit from the world's stage is said to have been the most edifying part of his career. When the long-desired event became known, *bourgeois* met *bourgeois* with the joyful salutation, "*Enfin, le Mazarin est mort!*" Even the queen-mother seemed relieved by it. But

the king, putting into practice the lessons of dissimulation which she and his foster-father had so sedulously taught him, affected grief for the loss he had sustained. "*Il sera un grand roi*," Mazarin had said many years before, "*il ne dit pas un mot de ce qu'il pense.*" His secret satisfaction, however, peeped out when he said openly that he "knew not what he might have been tempted to do had the cardinal lived much longer."

The court mourned only for royalty; but Henry IV., in ordering a court mourning for "*la belle* Gabrielle," had furnished a precedent for departing from the customary restriction, and for the first time since that event (unless the mourning for Cromwell be considered an instance of the same kind), the precedent was followed at Mazarin's death. Black and violet were worn for three months, and the wits wrote the cardinal's epitaph:

> "Ci gît l'Éminence deuxième,
> Dieu nous garde de la troisième."

CHAPTER XI.

Philippe, Monsieur, becomes Duc d'Orleans.—Marriage of Philippe.—Henriette d'Angleterre.—The Palais Royal given to Philippe.—Molière's Success as a Courtier.—Jean Baptiste Lulli.—His Skill as a Violinist.—French Academy of Music.—Musical Entertainments.—The Lyric Poet, Quinault.—Racine's Bridal Ode to the Queen.—The Man in the Iron Mask.

HOUGH the court was in mourning, it caused no interruption to its round of pleasures. Philippe, Monsieur, immediately after the cardinal's death, carried out his wish of marrying Henriette, though both Louis and the queen-mother were opposed to it. Gaston's title of Duc d'Orleans was conferred on him, and Philippe became the head of the new branch of the Orleans family. The balls, and *fêtes,* and theatrical entertainments that took place on the marriage of the king were renewed with increased animation to celebrate the nuptials of Monsieur. Henriette in features greatly resembled her brother, Charles II.

This conveys to the mind no idea of female beauty. We learn also that she was excessively thin, and had the not uncommon defect of being "*légèrement bossue.*" But she was amiable and witty; her manners were pleasing, and she had a very sweet voice and a winning smile. Monsieur, according to Madame de La Fayette, "*était d'une beauté et d'une taille plus convenable à une princesse, qu'à un prince,*" and Madame de Motteville describes his great beauty as a child. Other accounts speak less favourably of his personal appearance. His tastes were effeminate. He was fond of rings, jewels, perfumes, ribands, and such like feminine adjuncts of the toilette, and affected excessive *recherche* and nicety in dress.

Though his depravity in after years was great, Monsieur was now a favourite with the court; for he infused life and spirit into its amusements, which Louis XIV. did not. Much rivalry and little affection had subsisted between the brothers from childhood. Louis, with his imaginary god-like attributes, was both oppressed and oppressive; Philippe, to whom no such halo of glory was supposed to belong, had ever been disposed to rebel against his brother's great pretensions and airs of superiority. Though

one was no less vicious and ignorant than the other, yet Philippe as a child had displayed some intellectual capacity, which was immediately stifled, and now, at the age of twenty, he was more animated and lively than Louis. He was also restless and capricious, and displayed a degree of affability that permitted almost of an approach to friendship with some of the courtiers who, as inferior beings, worshipped the great Louis.

Henriette was then just seventeen. Brought up in the French court, she had acquired the ease and grace of manner, and perfection in the language which at that period distinguished French women of rank, and which gave her a decided advantage over the timid young queen. Maria Theresa was scarcely able to make herself understood in French, and there was a rigidity in her manners that, to one accustomed until the age of twenty-two to the extreme formalities with which Spanish royalty then surrounded itself, was not easy to shake off. The marriage festivities of Philippe and Henriette were, therefore, far more lively and spirited than were those of the king and queen. As Philippe was so bent on the match, though his family was opposed to it, it may be inferred

that he had some affection for his sprightly cousin. She, however, had none for him, and clouds soon arose to darken the sunny atmosphere in which, as a pair of brilliant butterflies, they then flitted about and enjoyed themselves.

The Palais Royal had become part of the appanage of the young Duc d'Orleans. At its theatre, in 1661, Molière produced "L'École des Maris." The muse of comedy had been much neglected, for Mazarin loved music, and had shown greater favour to the introduction of opera. But the national taste seemed rather to incline to the play. Fifteen or sixteen years had elapsed since the cardinal, to amuse the queen-regent and her court, had brought singers and machinists from Italy to produce the "Finza Pazza" at the theatre of the Petit Bourbon; yet music as an art had made no progress in France. The royal band of twenty-four violins still sufficed to play at the court balls and *ballets*. Dancing continued to be assiduously practised, and Louis, for ten years after his marriage, did not think it derogatory to seek flattery and applause by displaying his Terpsichorean powers in public. But the tragedy of "Britannicus" being played before him one evening in 1670, at St. Germain, the lines—

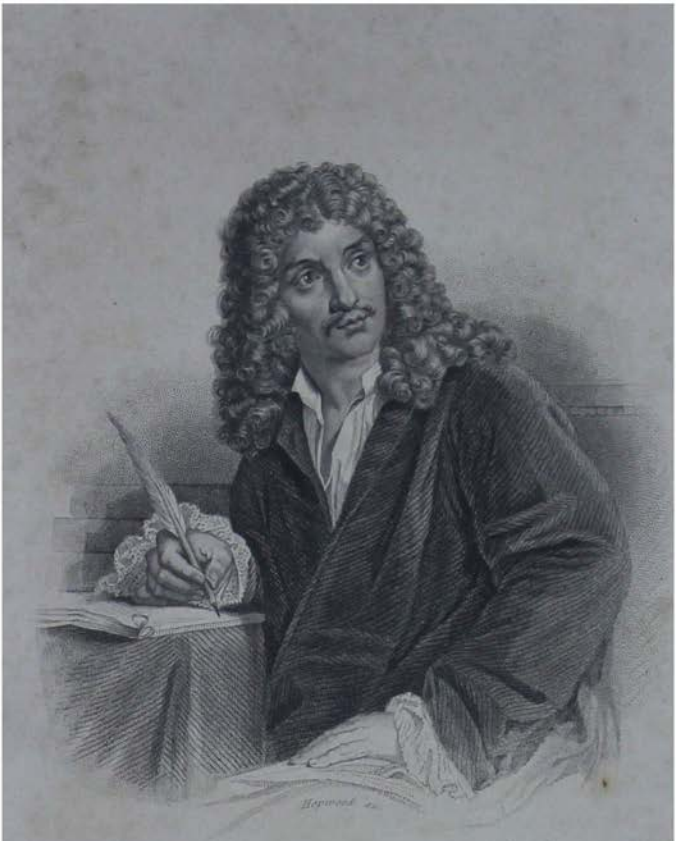
"Pour toute ambition, pour vertu singulière,
Il excelle à conduire un char dans la carrière,
À disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
À se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains,"

suddenly struck him as applying to himself; and henceforth in public he figured no more in the *ballet*.

Anne of Austria, whose most favourite amusement had once been the play, from advancing years, as well as from the first symptoms of the painful disease of which she died having appeared, was now indifferent to it. She attended it merely to please the king; the card-table and her oratory were her chief distractions. The preaching of Bossuet, who (if such a word may be used to express his grand oratorical style) preached his first sermon this year before the court, began greatly to interest her; while the talent of Molière, who played the principal part in his own pieces, once more drew her occasionally to the theatre. Molière assiduously sought the favour of Louis XIV., and with so much tact and adroitness, that his talent, as a courtier, was rewarded with success which his great genius, as a dramatic poet, would not alone have secured for him.

Side by side with the increasing favour and

popularity of Jean Baptiste Molière, another great genius was rising in public estimation, as well as in the favour of the king. This was Jean Baptiste Lulli. While serving as page to la Grande Mademoiselle, he amused himself in his leisure hours with playing the guitar and violin. Mademoiselle, perceiving his talent, gave him a master, and after a few lessons the pupil greatly surpassed his teacher. He continued diligently to practise alone, and for some years devoted himself to the theoretical study of music; at first under Cambert, the organist of the collegiate church of St. Honoré, who, in 1659, composed the music for a pastoral which the Abbé Perrin had written in verse, and which was sung at a *fête* given by M. de la Haye, at Issy. Contrary to the custom of the time, no dances were introduced; but the music was so much admired, and the singing of Mdlle. de St. Hilaire, who took the principal part, gave so much importance to the little operetta, that Mazarin, hearing of it, had it played before the king and the court. Another novelty in it was a concert of flutes, instruments which had never before been heard in a theatre. Lulli, who played in it, had aided Cambert in arranging the score.



MOLIERE.

The Abbé Perrin's musical pastoral pleased the court as much as it had pleased the company at Issy; it served also to bring Lulli prominently into notice, and to give France a great musician. He was no longer of the household of Mademoiselle; she had some time before dismissed him, in high indignation at hearing a song of the Fronde that greatly shocked her, sung by Lulli, who had set it to music. Lulli was now twenty-six. He had been brought to France when a boy of thirteen; he had, therefore, had the advantage of acquiring the language perfectly, and of overcoming a difficulty which had been found a stumbling-block to success by two Italian composers. Without understanding, or taking into account, the difference between the spoken language and musical declamation, in the lengthening of the final syllables, they had endeavoured to put music to French words.

Lulli has been called "*le père de la vraie musique en France.*" When compelled to leave his first patroness, he was recommended by Cambert and Barully to fill a vacancy in the king's band of twenty-four violins. His superior skill as a violinist was soon remarked, and the king—expressly for Lulli to take the lead—

desired him to form a band of twelve of the most able performers he could find, or train to proficiency, to be called "La Bande des petits Violons du Roi," and so ably were they trained by their leader, that the performances of the "Petits Violons" soon greatly surpassed that of the grand twenty-four. Lulli's compositions were for some time found difficult to execute; so entirely was musical art in its infancy. He was the first musician in France who introduced basses and fugues. His celebrity both as a composer and performer was unequalled in the seventeenth century. He played the violin, we are told, with great feeling and expression, causing frequently deep emotion in those who heard him.

Lulli's genius and ability brought him both wealth and consideration, and he became a person of importance at the French court. He established the Royal Academy of Music, for which the king granted him letters patent in 1671. He appears to have been a handsome man, of very agreeable manners. The king created for him the post of "Surintendant de la Musique du Roi," a sinecure at first, but which Lulli, in his enthusiasm for his art, availed himself of to introduce a taste for the cultivation of music,

both vocal and instrumental, amongst the younger ladies of the court; and in this his personal advantages aided him not a little. He was fortunate, too, in meeting with so able a man as Quinault, the poet, to furnish him with *libretti* for his operas. They were very different from the ridiculous trash of modern *libretti*, being in themselves poems that may be read with pleasure without the aid of music to give effect to them. But the words of the poet and the strains of the musician were so happily combined that they lent new beauty and tenderness to each other, of which scenes from "Atys," "Armide," and "Roland" have been cited as examples.

At the theatre of "Le Jeu de Paume," Lulli gave a musical entertainment called "Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus." Between the acts there were appropriate *ballets*; and several grandees of the court exhibited in them their skill in the dance.

Lulli excelled especially in recitative, in which he remained unrivalled long after his death. His *collaborateur* shared with him the merit of its excellence, in supplying words worthy of being musically declaimed. Quinault's success in this new kind of poetry excited

the jealousy of the poets of the time. They affected to contemn it, as beneath their great poetic powers; and even Boileau attacked him in his satires.

"*Il manquait à Boileau*," says Voltaire, "*d'avoir sacrifié aux graces; il chercha en vain toute sa vie à humilier un homme qui n'était connu que par elles.*"

Quinault's flowing stanzas were on every one's lips, and his lyric poems survived the music to which they were wedded, and were then supposed to owe their reputation.

During the lifetime of the musician and the poet, the king's highest marks of favour were bestowed on Lulli. Quinault, who was young and, like Lulli, handsome and attractive, had his part in them, but it was a minor one, so far as the king was concerned. Both they and Molière contributed to enliven and vary the bridal *fêtes* and entertainments, and Lulli, in the Marquis de Rieux de Sourdiac, met with a musical patron who afterwards greatly aided him in establishing opera in France. As part of the amusements in celebration of the king's marriage, the marquis had Corneille's "Toison d'Or" performed at his Château de Neubourg, and with music and scenery.

But Corneille, though he lived upwards of twenty years after these bridal festivities took place, was falling into the sere and yellow leaf period of life. His musical rivals were young men, and Molière, who was then about forty, had already devoted his talents to making propriety of conduct ridiculous, in order to excuse the vices of the king. However, in holding up to derisive laughter those presumptuous mortals who dared to imitate the pompous airs and royal strut of Louis XIV., Molière did but follow Quinault, who in 1663 also produced his comedy of "La Mère coquette," in which "*les marquis*" were first satirized. But le grand Corneille in his time had drawn tears from the eyes—unaccustomed to weeping—of the Grand Condé, on the first representation of "Cinna;" and if he did not acquire wealth, his reputation as a dramatic poet was unrivalled and his name honoured throughout France. Racine, then but twenty, was first inspired to essay his pen in honour of these *fêtes*, and addressed a bridal ode to the king and queen. It was not only graciously accepted, but, to his surprise, it appears, substantially rewarded. This unlooked-for success is said to have determined him to attempt dramatic writing, contrary to the advice

of Corneille, who did not recognize in the specimens submitted to him any special talent for the career he proposed to adopt.

It was also in the year 1661, and when the cardinal had been dead but a few months, that that event—so mysterious that the victim of it remains still an unknown personage—occurred in France, the incarceration in the Bastille of the individual called the Man in the Iron Mask. No state secret was probably ever so long and so faithfully kept. He lived in the Bastille forty-two years, lodged and attended as well as it was possible to be in that stronghold, with which are associated so many gloomy reminiscences of deeds of darkness and blood. The governor, and also minister of state, when they visited their prisoner, stood before him uncovered. His table was served abundantly and with the choicest fare. The governor himself served the dishes, then retired. Whatever he expressed a wish for was immediately provided. His dress was rich, indicating a person of high rank, and his habits were those of one accustomed to the refinements and elegancies of life. He wore the finest linen and the richest laces; whether he always wore his mask—which was cleverly contrived, and must have taken

some time to prepare—is not certain. The doctor who attended him occasionally had never seen his face, but was prepossessed in his favour by his pleasing voice and cultivated manner of expressing himself. He uttered no complaints, and entered into no conversation beyond what the object of his physician's visit made needful. When he died he was buried in the cemetery of the church of St. Paul, where Rabelais was buried at the foot of a great tree.

The last person who possessed the secret of who and what this distinguished prisoner was, and the nature of his crime, was the Minister de Chamillart. On his death-bed he was urged by his son-in-law, le Maréchal de la Feuillade, to reveal the secret to him. He however declined. "It is the state's secret," was his reply to the maréchal's entreaties. "He had sworn never to reveal it, and it must die with him." And effectually dead and buried the secret remains, and probably will continue to be, until the day of doom.

CHAPTER XII.

The Cardinal-Minister's Palace.—The Hôtels Mazarin and Nevers.—The Cardinal's Hoarded Wealth.—St. Evremond.—La Bonne Régence.—Nicolas Fouquet.—Character of Fouquet.—The Château de Vaux.—The Sculpture and Paintings.—A Grand Fête-Champêtre.—The Theatre—The Banquet.—The Picturesque Dresses.—Fouquet's Gallery of Portraits.—The King's Gracious Adieux.—Arrest of Fouquet and Pélisson.

HE vast and sumptuous edifice, with its finely-sculptured *façades* and splendidly decorated interior, which the cardinal-minister had prepared for his residence, occupied, together with its outbuildings and gardens, the extensive tract of ground lying between the Rues Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, Vivienne, De Richelieu, and Colbert. The original building was constructed for the wealthy president, Tubeuf, by the architect, Lemuet. But Mazarin employed François Mansard—who had won celebrity in that *chef-d'œuvre* of his art, le Château de Maisons, near St. Germain, which was wholly designed by him—to add to

the hôtel a splendid two-storied gallery. In the upper story were hung the five hundred pictures of the great masters, collected by Mazarin at enormous expense. In the lower gallery were arranged antique statues, busts, marble and bronze vases, and other treasures of art in great number. The domestic offices were enlarged, a handsome chapel was built, and a library, that occupied the sides of the grand *cour d'honneur*, whence access is now obtained to the various departments of the Bibliothèque Nationale; located in the former abode of the unworthy favourite and minister of Anne of Austria and Louis XIV.

The heirs of Mazarin divided his magnificent hôtel into two separate dwellings. That on the side of the Rue Vivienne retained the name of L'Hôtel Mazarin, and became the residence of le Maréchal de Meilleraie, who, having married Hortense Mancini, was created Duc de Mazarin. The other part was called L'Hôtel de Nevers, and belonged to the cardinal's nephew, Mancini, then Duc de Nevers. Each hôtel had a splendid suite of *salons*, furnished far more luxuriously than the royal residences. The carpets and hangings were the choicest productions of the Gobelins, after the designs of Le Brun, then

designer *en chef* of that establishment. Exquisite taste reigned throughout. Cost had not been studied. It was no consideration with the cardinal, while there remained a *pistole* in the public treasury, or any device yet untried by which money could be got from the people. His own hoards he was unwilling to touch. If he could add to them, well and good, but they must not be diminished. He heaped up wealth like a miser. Years after his death, drawers and cabinets were found, containing Spanish doubloons, gold counters, plate and medals. The Duchess Hortense, for amusement, used to throw them out of window to the people.

The mourning of the cardinal's family was no sooner ended than the *salons* of the two hôtels were thrown open, twice in the week, for the reception of the *beau monde*. "*La galanterie Italienne*," introduced at court by Mazarin, and which in the early days of the regency was not regarded with disfavour by Anne of Austria, prevailed at these *réunions*. "*La galanterie sentimentale*," of the D'Urfé and Rambouillet schools, had then held in check his insidious attempts to make society even more corrupt than it was inclined to be. The utter subversion of morals was his aim, and, probably, only

the intense hatred his burdensome taxation inspired, towards him and everything called Italian, together with the troubles of the Fronde, prevented the court of France under Anne of Austria and Mazarin from becoming the most dissolute one in Europe.

St. Evremond, whose reputation was considerable as a *bel esprit* and a writer of *vers de société*, had employed his pen to cast ridicule on the *Frondeurs*. Consequently he was high in favour with Mazarin, who appointed him one of his suite of gentlemen to accompany him to the Pyrenees. St. Evremond was a lover of the Duchess Hortense as well as of Mdlle. Ninon, and was perhaps a more assiduous frequenter, at this time, of the new *salon* Mazarin than of the *salon* of the Rue des Tournelles. The design of bringing into vogue "*la galanterie Italienne*" was one congenial to his voluptuous nature. He was not a young man when the cardinal died. He was in his forty-eighth year, but his manners were seductive, and he was not then disfigured by the enormous wen that grew between his eyes, and made him so startlingly hideous in after years. He had fought, in his wild youth, at Nordlingen, and had been the guest of the great Condé, which did not

prevent him from satirizing the prince and taking a pension for such services from the cardinal. Of the happy times of the regency St. Evremond sang:

"J'ai vu le bon temps de la bonne régence,
Temps où régnait une heureuse abondance;
Temps où la ville aussi bien que la cour
Ne respiraient que les jeux et l'amour.
La politique indulgente
De notre nature innocente
Favorisait tous les désirs.
Tout goût paroissait légitime,
La douce erreur ne s'appelait point crime
Les vices délicats se nommaient plaisirs."

This good time of "*la bonne liberté*" St. Evremond was looking forward to seeing revived in the *salons* of the Mancini family. Most unexpectedly, however, these *salons* were closed, and before many *réunions* of much importance had taken place in them. For it was announced that the brilliant Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle, *surintendant des finances* during the eight years of Mazarin's reign, and generally regarded as his most probable successor as first minister, had been arrested at Nantes, by the king's order, and with his secretary Pélisson conveyed to the Bastille.

Consternation, alarm, regret, spread through-

out society. Fouquet, it was certain, would not fall alone. Many persons would lose both credit and distinction by an inquiry into his affairs. But, putting all feelings of self-interest aside, Fouquet was a man so very much liked that regret for the misfortune that had befallen him was general and sincere; except, indeed, among the officials of the government who were to profit by his fall. They pursued him with venomous hate, hoping to bring him to the scaffold. Yet it was rather for the state robberies of the all-powerful and despotic late minister than for depredations of his own that Fouquet suffered. When Mazarin received back the gift of his enormous wealth, confirmed to him as a present from the king, moved either by jealous fear that another might with equal impunity appropriate the public funds, or by the self-deceptive idea that denunciation of the fault of a subordinate would be atonement for his own crime, he made a communication to the king that excited his wrath against Fouquet, and prejudiced him in favour of Colbert, and other enemies of the *surintendant.*

Fouquet was a wealthy man, and had paid for his appointment a very large sum of money. (All official posts or employments were sold

at that time, and many new and useless ones were created by Mazarin expressly to be sold.) The *surintendant des finances* possessed power and influence; but it was as a man of culture, of refined and fascinating manners, and artistic and literary tastes that he shone in society. His personal appearance was prepossessing, and the thorough kindliness of his disposition won him the esteem and affection of many, who remained true friends to him in misfortune. There was a certain grandeur in his character; for while liberal and generous in the extreme, he conferred his favours with so much tact, so much delicacy and feeling, that he always appeared to be himself the person obliged. He was a munificent patron of genius and talent, whether literary or artistic. When tested by trouble and great misfortune, he exhibited extraordinary patience, and much elevation of mind. Yet Fouquet had many failings and weaknesses. Amongst them was his worship of the fair sex, and the fair sex generally smiled graciously upon him.

At no time did Louis XIV. display more vindictiveness, more implacable resentment than in his rigorous treatment of the Marquis de Belle Isle, whom he made the scapegoat of the

cardinal's sins. He may, too, have seen in him, what he in fact was, a man greatly his superior —brilliant, witty, refined, and of cultivated mind—for the king was fully, and often painfully, sensible of his educational deficiencies. Yet he had been an apt scholar in that art which the cardinal thought needful above all others—and upon which Louis XIII. had piqued himself on being so perfect in—dissimulation. For he had resolved on the downfall of his *surintendant* when, with smiling graciousness, he accepted the *fête* Fouquet begged per mission to offer him at the Château de Vaux.

This Château de Vaux was a "palace of de lights." Its vast grounds and gardens—then reputed the finest in Europe—had been laid out by the celebrated Le Notre and planted by La Quintinie. Pierre Puget and Coustou had designed and executed the elaborately sculptured fountains. The system of waterworks that supplied them produced effects then unsurpassed, though afterwards far excelled at Versailles and Marly. The site of the château had been admirably chosen, amidst the beautiful scenery of one of nature's most picturesque spots. The foundations were laid, and some progress made in the building, when a design

combining greater convenience in the interior arrangements, with finer architectural effects in the exterior, fell under the notice of Fouquet. Immediately he ordered the removal of the portion already constructed, and the recommencement of the château on the new plan, which led to an immense increase in the expense. According to the present value of money, the Château de Vaux cost not less than a million and a half sterling.

The decorations in sculpture and painting of what may be termed the state apartments, were executed by the ablest artists of that day. And all had worked for him *con amore*, as a man of taste who could appreciate their talents, as well as a princely patron. In the great ball-room, Le Brun—to whom Fouquet had given a pension of twelve thousand francs, equal to about fifty thousand of the present time—had displayed his skill both in designing and painting; and there his young *élève* Jouvenet—the painter of the cupola of the church of St. Louis des Invalides, and who, having met with an accident, in his later years painted with his left hand—learnt from his master's labours the first principles of his art. In other apartments were panel-paintings by Pierre Mignard, the favourite

élève of Simon Vouet. Pictures from the easel of Santerre and of Claude Lorraine, and the already scarce and much-prized productions of Le Sueur—who died some five years before at the age of thirty-eight—adorned the walls of his private rooms.

To receive the king and queen, the queen-mother, and the court, the gardens, grounds, and fountains were illuminated. A scene of enchantment was produced, amidst which the magnificent marquis, with the marquise, and his mother, the Countess de Vaux, moved as the fairy prince and princesses. What a pang all this splendour occasioned to the self-love of Louis! It was dazzling, surprising, even to him; for Fontainebleau, Compiègne, St. Germain, and Versailles, as it then existed, were not to be compared with the Château de Vaux, either for beauty of situation, interior adornment, or luxurious arrangements for personal comfort. Fuel was added to the smouldering flame of his resentment when the delighted, and, as he believed, honoured and favoured host came forth with "*cette mine riante et fixe*" (as Madame de Sévigné remarks in her letters to M. de Pompome), to receive his royal guests. At Vaux all the ladies found, in their apartments, as in

after years was the custom at Marly, a magnificently arranged *toilette à la duchesse*, and everything necessary for patching and painting, and completing their *coiffures* and costume generally, according to the taste and fashion of the time.

Molière had written "Les Facheux," especially for the *fêtes* de Vaux, and it was first represented in the theatre of that château. The secretary Pélisson wrote the prologue, which is said to have been witty and clever. The famous Vatel aided in preparing the banquets. He was then *sous-chef* in the kitchen department. Had this most sensitive of cooks fallen on his sword when the distinguished patron in whose service he had graduated in the culinary art fell from his place in society, like a bright meteor from the starry sky, he would have ended his career far more sublimely than by his suicide some years after, when Maître d'hôtel at Chantilly, because of the non-arrival of fish to place before the royal guest of M. le Prince.

The king, looking very handsome and majestic, and concealing his anger under an air of pleased satisfaction with the wonders of Vaux, was conducted through galleries and saloons to the suite of apartments prepared for him. A

train of courtiers followed, wearing those blue and crimson casaques, embroidered in silver and gold, which the king himself had designed, and which it was a distinguished mark of royal favour to be permitted to wear. The company generally was extremely picturesque; and the men, with their velvets and laces, plumed hats, and diamond-hilted swords, were, no doubt, more interesting than they are in their prosaic costume of the present day. The little queen, perched up on her high-heeled shoes, and apparently about to be crushed under her towering head-dress, was the centre of a very brilliant throng. Happily, Anne of Austria was able to be present, and, by her influence over the king, restrained him from arresting, in the midst of the *fête*, the man whose hospitality he had accepted, and who had exerted himself to receive him with all due honour.

Fouquet's crest was a squirrel ascending a tree, and the motto, "Quo non ascendam?" Louis, who was supposed to have translated the "Commentaries," did not understand this. At his request, it was explained to him, "*Où ne monterai-je point?*" As it was rather ostentatiously displayed frequently to meet the eye, the king chose to see in it a revelation of

ambitious views. Everywhere, too, an asp was painted at the foot of the tree, and was supposed to be an allusion to Fouquet's inveterate enemy, Colbert, whose crest was an asp. This, together with the fact that he was fortifying Belle Isle, also, that he was Procureur-Général du Parlement, and had everywhere numerous partizans, made the king anxious that there should be no delay in securing his person and taking possession of his papers.

Some two or three writers of the time mention that the king was further irritated by seeing the portrait of Mdlle. de La Vallière amongst a number of others, forming a gallery of *belles dames* who were the objects of Fouquet's admiration. The portrait of Madame Scarron was said to have been also a prominent one. But it is more likely that he possessed neither of these portraits; for Mdlle. de La Vallière could have but very recently arrived from Blois, to be one of the *filles d'honneur* of Madame, with whom the king was then on terms of such very intimate friendship, that Monsieur complained of it to the queen-mother. He thought there was too much sentimentality in it, considering their relationship both to him and to each other. And if Monsieur's idea of propriety

was shocked, there must have been some reason for complaint.

At the age of sixteen, Louis had refused to dance with Henriette, who was then but eleven, because he "did not like little girls." When his brother was so anxious to marry her, the extreme slightness of her figure led the king contemptuously to remark, "*Qu'elle n'etait que des os*;" for without *embonpoint*—in compliment to Anne of Austria, probably, who had enough and to spare of it—pretensions to beauty were grudgingly allowed. But when Henriette was raised to the dignity of "Madame," and freed from the restraint in which both her mother and the queen, her aunt, had strictly held her, Louis was fascinated by her youthful vivacity, her pleasant temper, and constant flow of spirits. Madame took the lead in the amusements of the court; the timid little queen was thrown quite into the shade, and, both in Paris and at Fontainebleau, the frivolous pastimes in which these royal personages passed the greater part of the day were arranged in accordance with the capricious tastes of Henriette. The king was always at her side, whether bathing, dressing, or dining.

Dinner ended, they set off in the same car-

riage, the numerous company of ladies and courtiers following—all in full feather, and accompanied by a carriageful of fiddlers—to seek some suitable spot where they could trip it gaily on the greensward. There, well into the night, or rather early morning, they danced and flirted; lighted, in the absence of chaste Cynthia's silvery beams, by the lurid rays of many torches. Weary of dancing, they mounted their horses, for though they went in carriages, they returned as a prancing cavalcade, enlivening their night-ride home through the sombre woods with laughter and snatches of song. An hilarious supper followed; then, wearied nature sought in sleep to recruit its powers for another well-spent day. Monsieur by no means objected to this kind of life, and there were many fair ladies in the company whose society he preferred to that of Madame. But he objected to Louis' finding pleasure in it. The queen-mother was also much annoyed, because he no longer spent his spare time with her and her ladies.

Madame's spiritual director was desired to reprove her for her heedlessness, and the queen-mother remonstrated with her son. The king, to silence the gossip of the court, affected to make love to two of Anne of Austria's *filles*

d'honneur, Mdlles. de Pons, and De Chémerault, and, at the same time, to one of *les filles de Madame*, Mdlle. de La Vallière. The Comte de Guiche, said to have been a lover of La Vallière, withdrew in favour of the king, and made love to Madame herself. This new arrangement did not satisfy Monsieur. He and De Guiche had some very warm words on the subject, and spoke their minds freely to each other. The Maréchal de Grammont, De Guiche's father, was requested to interfere. A finished courtier, he was astonished at his son's audacity, and at once despatched him to Paris, forbidding him to return to Fontainebleau. Monsieur also objected to the king's attentions to his wife's maid of honour, and dissatisfaction was general. La Vallière, says Madame de La Fayette, was "*Douce et naïve, et avait peu de fortune;*" and another writer adds, "*Fade, boiteuse, et marquée de la petite vérole.*" She was unused to court life, and, flattered by the attentions of the king, fell deeply in love with him. He was not then in love with her; but the affair of the king and Madame followed too close upon her marriage with Monsieur to allow of any credit being given to the story that Fouquet had been La Vallière's lover,

and had already a portrait of her hanging in his cabinet.

Fouquet, at the time of the Fronde, took the royalist side. He was a partizan of Mazarin, and aided in smoothing the way for his return to France. Scarron was odious to him, and his widow applied to him in vain for a pension. It was at the instance of the Chevalier de Meri that the queen-mother continued to her the pension of 2,000 fr. she had granted to Scarron. It again passed away from her on the queen's death, and was renewed only after the lapse of some years, at Madame de Montespan's solicitation. It was, therefore, as unlikely that Fouquet possessed the portrait of Madame Scarron as that of Mdlle. de La Vallière. The memoirs of the time, that refer to these affairs of gallantry, as they are termed, cannot be wholly relied upon. Malevolence, bitterness of spirit, wounded vanity, guided the pens of many writers; gross flattery, adulation, and a desire to appear to have been at the bottom of every secret, characterize others. One, sees nothing but vice and deformity; another, nothing but virtue and beauty, and in the self-same person. This, however, is certain—society of every grade was thoroughly corrupt; rotten at the core.

Red-heeled boots, slashed doublets, and flowing wigs, cordelières of pearls, Moorish fans, masks, patches, and paint; monumental headdresses, and the thousand other items indispensable to the toilets of fine ladies and gentlemen of the Louis XIV. period, have a charmingly picturesque effect, seen through the long vista of two centuries or more, and heightened by the glamour of *la grande politesse, et la grande galanterie,* of the Grand Monarque and his court. Life seems to have been with them one long fancy dress-ball, a never-ending carnival, a perpetual whirl, an endless succession of *fêtes* and *carrousels*—a period exhibiting, in its various phases, much animation and dramatic effect overlaying frivolity and vice.

To re-enter for a moment the Château de Vaux: the *fêtes* being ended, the king took leave of his magnificent host—a smiling, gracious leave—"*il lui fit des caresses, et lui traita avec distinction,*" but there was rancour in his heart. To attempt to arrest Fouquet on his own domain was deemed hazardous. His rescue and escape from the country, were thought probable, and his enemies sought his life. On some pretence he was called to Nantes,

and there, he and Pélisson were arrested. From Nantes they were conveyed to Paris, and imprisoned in the Bastille for three years, while their papers were being examined, and evidence, true or false, against Fouquet was being hunted up, preparatory to a mock trial.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mazarin's Improvements in the Old City.—The Paul Cliffords of Paris.—The King Returns to the Louvre.—The Grande Façade.—Perrault, Mansard, and Bernini.—Le Château de Maisons.—Bernini Returns to Rome.—The Louvre and its Doctor. — The Louvre Abandoned. — "Un Favori sans Mérite."—Improvements in Paris.—L'Académie des Belles-Lettres.—Learned Societies Founded.—Louis, under Colbert and Lyonne.

" HAT was done," one may inquire, "for the improvement of Paris during the eight years' reign of Mazarin?" "Very little indeed," must be the reply. The works at the Louvre were almost entirely suspended. The smouldering political agitation that survived the Fronde, made the work of crushing out the spirit of the people, seem a more desirable undertaking than that of improving, or embellishing the capital. Some few of the narrowest of its narrow streets had been widened; with the view of rendering the formation of barricades less easy, in the event of renewed revolt, and of affording space, in case of

necessity, for bringing through them the small pieces of cannon then in use. For lighting and cleansing the city, or for establishing an efficient police, nothing had been done. A few fine hôtels had been built by the *noblesse;* but, enclosed in large gardens, and separated from their dirty surroundings by walls, high and thick, they only still further impeded the circulation of air, and deepened the gloom of those gloomy back streets—the lurking-places of plague and small-pox.

For the lower ranks of the social scale, this boasted old Paris, this city of walled palaces and monastic abodes of a wealthy priesthood, this "diamond and carbuncle of European capitals," was still a terrible place. Even the high and mighty were, sometimes, made to feel the desirableness of adopting more stringent measures for the security of the property and lives of the inhabitants. In 1660, Mademoiselle de Scudéry, writing to Godeau, says: "During the last six weeks there have been many most audacious robberies in the streets of Paris. More than forty carriages, of persons of quality, have been stopped and plundered by the robbers, who are always on horseback, and in parties of from fifteen to twenty." This exceeds

the audacity of the bold highwaymen of the glorious days of Louis' rival—our own Charles II., of blessed memory. They had the grace to keep out of the streets of "London town," and to confine their operations to districts not approaching nearer to it than Kensington, Knightsbridge, or, at the boldest venture, Hyde Park.

A few years later, she writes on the same subject, with little variation of details, but complaining also of the losses she herself sustains from the frequent visits of daring thieves to her dwelling; and further, that these depredations, together with the non-payment of pensions she is supposed to be in receipt of, have reduced her to very great straits.*

When Mazarin died, Louis forsook the Palais Royal, which became the property of the Orleans family, and established himself at the Louvre. In 1661 a fire occurred there, in the grand gallery, and the necessity for immediately repairing it caused the works, generally, to be resumed with greater diligence. The superin-

* The payment of pensions granted in those days was very problematical, at least as to time. Often they ran into long arrears, causing considerable inconvenience to needy literary men, and other recipients of the state's bounty; but in amount they were usually liberal.

tendence of them was offered to Mansard, who declined it, except on conditions, relating to the designing of the new portions of the edifice, that were thought likely to entail too heavy an expenditure. Louis was at that time engaged in settling the new financial arrangements with Colbert, who was then under the delusion that economy, thenceforth, was to be the order of the day.

Some portion of the north wing of the Louvre, and of the *façade* looking towards the Seine, had been erected by the architects, Levau and Dorbay, from the designs of Claude Perrault. To complete the exterior, the fourth *façade*—facing the east and enclosing the court—had yet to be constructed, and the king desired, as it formed the grand entrance to the palace, that it should exceed the others in magnificence. This, with the new buildings at St. Germain, was the work offered to and declined by Mansard. Other architects most in repute were then requested to send in designs, but none was considered quite satisfactory. In this dilemma it was determined to seek the aid of Bernini, reputed the first architect in Europe. The pope, Alexander VII., was scarcely willing to allow this great artiste to cross the Alps; but,

after considerable diplomacy on the part of Louis, permission was given. Carriages were sent on to bring him to Paris, and generally the arrangements made for his journey were as if intended for a sovereign prince. He was conducted, on his arrival, to the Louvre and to the apartments prepared for his reception, with almost as much ceremony and distinction as the pontiff himself could have looked for, had he honoured France with a visit.

Bernini was, however, less anxious to receive compliments and ceremonious visits than to see what Paris had to show in the way of architectural *chef-d'œuvres*. As France had sent so far for an architect, his expectations were not excessive. Great, then, was his astonishment when he saw what had already been accomplished after the designs of Perrault, and greater still when he was shown those, which Perrault had laid before the king, for the grand *façade* which he had been brought from Italy to design and construct. The Château de Maisons, which Bernini inspected, revealed also that France had in François Mansard another great master of his art; and many others, of almost equal note, were afterwards made known to him in their works, when he visited in Paris

the fine hôtels of their construction.* Christopher Wren—not yet Sir Christopher—was in Paris at that time, and mentions, in one of his letters, having seen "Old Bernini, who allowed him just a glimpse of the design he had prepared for the Louvre."

But, like many other Italian artists, Bernini thought the climate of France detestable. The romantic philosopher, Descartes, had left Paris because he fancied its atmosphere too light and stimulating, producing too much play of the imagination. The Italians, on the contrary, felt that it put the imagination into fetters, allowed of no flights of fancy, generated no brilliant ideas; so that from the time of Francis I. to that of Louis XIV. they were all in haste to fly from the stifled, walled-up city, and its pent-up, pestiferous air. Cabals and intrigues also met Bernini at every turn, yet the king, in October, 1665, laid the first stone of the

* The Marquis de Maisons, when he employed Mansard to build him his château near St. Germain, left him wholly unfettered in planning and designing it. Mansard, following entirely his own judgment and fancy, produced a *chef-d'œuvre*—the finest of his works. It was expeditiously completed, and for the moderate cost of 40,000 gold pieces of the coinage of Charles IX. that had been found in a cellar when making excavations for the enlarging of the marquis's hôtel in the Rue es Prouvaires, Paris.

grand entrance, intended to have been constructed after Bernini's design. The work, however, was not proceeded with. Delays and difficulties arose, or were purposely made to prevent further progress, and Bernini, after eight months' residence in Paris, wearied with being continually thwarted and opposed, threw up his commission in disgust, and returned to Rome.

He was paid from the time of his arrival to that of his departure at the rate of five louis d'or per day; and although his visit had been utterly sterile in results, the king, besides making him a present of fifty thousand crowns, conferred on him a pension of two thousand, and another for his son of five hundred crowns. The great Roman architect had not been nearly so well rewarded for constructing the grand colonnade surrounding the court of St. Peter's at Rome.* If he thought but poorly of Paris, he thought highly of the munificence of the king. The great honours with which he was received were renewed on his departure, and in acknowledgment of them and the monarch's liberality,

* Sir Christopher Wren was paid for building St. Paul's and superintending and designing generally after the great fire of London, £200 a year, which included all expenses for plans, etc.

Bernini sent, as a present, an equestrian statue of Louis XIV., executed at Rome, for the gardens of Versailles. His designs for the *façade* were laid aside, and the grand ones of Perrault received the approbation of the king. The Louvre was therefore "again," as the wits of the day said, "put into the hands of the doctor."

Claude Perrault, like Sir Christopher Wren, had not been regularly trained for an architect. His natural bent, as well as his great ability as a draughtsman, led him to architectural studies. He was of the medical profession, but no longer practised as a physician, except in the case of a few private friends, whose faith in his skill to repair the dilapidations of the human frame was as great as their belief that he surpassed all others in architectural knowledge. In 1670 he finished his splendid work, so far as crowning the grand entrance with the famous cornices, each of a single stone fifty-two feet in length. They were taken from the quarries of Meudon, and were transported to the Louvre by means of carriages or machines, invented by Perrault—the want of such facilities for bringing up the materials required having added considerably to the

difficulty of a speedy completion of the work.

Perrault was not only poorly remunerated for his labour—except that to him it was a labour of love—but he had the mortification of seeing the king's interest in its progress and completion gradually decline. From 1670 the sum annually set apart for fully carrying out the designs and projects of Perrault became less every year, until, in 1680, it ceased altogether. The architect's plans, become useless, were then deposited in the private library of the Cabinet du roi, and the Louvre—once destined to represent in its vast extent, its grand architecture, magnificent interior decorations, and dazzling costliness of furniture, the power, the greatness, and the exalted state of the King of France—was abandoned to the rats and bats, and in a few years fell into a miserable condition of ruin. Any portion that then remained habitable was divided into small apartments, and given to poor artists, poets, or other needy persons for whom it pleased the ministers to provide a shelter. Mean stalls were built against the outside walls, and wretched little hovels set up in the *grand cour*. In this deplorable state the magnificent palace of the Louvre, on which

so much labour, skill, and money had been lavished, remained, till Louis XV., to save it from the irremediable decay it was fast falling into, ordered it to be repaired and restored where most urgently needed. Something further was done under Louis XVI.; but Napoleon I., in 1803, commissioned the architects MM. Perrier and Fontaine to put the edifice into thorough repair, to restore the sculptures, and to finish some of the uncompleted designs of Perrault—a work which occupied them uninterruptedly for the space of nine years.

Louis, who transferred his favour from château to château as he did from mistress to mistress, forsook the Louvre for that "*favori sans mérite*," Versailles. In 1666, the works under Perrault being in full operation, the king went to St. Germain, pending, as was supposed, the building of the fourth *façade* and the completion of the alterations and additions at Versailles, which were carried on simultaneously with the works at Paris. But Louis disliked both his capital and the mutinous Parisians. As a resident, he returned to them no more, and his temporary visits were few and far between.

St. Simon (who is often very unjust) has

said, and many have repeated it after him, that Louis XIV. "did nothing for Paris, either ornamental or useful, except building the Pont Royal, and that only from necessity." But within five years after the death of Mazarin, he did that which contributed towards the convenience of the Parisians, and the healthfulness and embellishment of Paris, more than all that his predecessors had done, since it had been a fortified city—"he threw down the walls thereof." (He did so little worth notice, that it is not right to deny him the merit of that little.) Those walls, something more than thirty years before, his father had rebuilt and added to, on enclosing a tract of ground north of the Seine. With their removal light and air were admitted, a pleasant promenade of boulevards, planted with trees, surrounded the city in the place of its gloomy old walls, moats, towers, and bastions. The city gates were rebuilt in the form of triumphal arches.

The Hôtel des Invalides is also due to Louis XIV. Its foundations were already laid in 1663; and the building was finished in 1675. Jules Hardouin Mansard, the nephew of François, was the architect of the beautiful chapel of that noble institution, as he was of

that of Versailles and other works connected with the palace. The Royal Observatory was also erected by the king's order, and, besides these material improvements in the city, several learned and scientific societies were founded.

Some members of the Académie Française united in 1663 to form a second academy; afterwards established by letters patent as the Académie des Belles-Lettres. The object of its founders was to hand down to posterity, by means of medals, commemorative of great events, and ranged in chronological order, a knowledge of the chief incidents of the reign of Louis XIV., and especially those in which the king, personally, was concerned, or the glory of them attributed to him. As the members of the society increased in number, they occupied themselves less in glorifying the actions of the king than with critical research into history; in order to test the truth of much that had been transmitted from remote periods, as historical fact, but which, when the grounds it rested upon were examined into, proved to be but mere fable. For recording the discoveries, experiments, inventions, and criticisms of this and other learned bodies, the *Journal des Savants*—the first publication of the kind—was established in 1665.

In the following year, Colbert's suggestion, supported by several learned mathematicians, that it was advisable to found in Paris an Académie des Sciences, was approved by the king. The idea was derived from the meetings of those scientific men, who became the first members of the Royal Society of London. Some of its academicians were despatched by the king to Cayenne and other parts of the world to make astronomical observations, which led to the discovery, afterwards confirmed by Newton, of the flattened conformation of the earth at the poles. Several other societies, or academies, were founded in the early years of Louis' reign, after Mazarin's death—such as the schools of architecture and sculpture; the Royal Academy of Music; that of painting, with its branch academy at Rome—where, at the king's expense, young students, who had obtained prizes for the merit of their productions at the Academy in Paris, were lodged and supported, while studying the works of the great Italian masters. If the king did not originate these societies—though it is probable that he was made to believe that he did—at least he approved and established them by his grant of royal letters patent.

For some time after the reins of government were delivered into the hands of Louis XIV., he followed, under the guidance of Colbert and Lyonne — notwithstanding his resolve to be guided by no minister—the prevailing tone of the age, he did not lead it; and France, though then resigned to the yoke of despotism, was yet disposed for progress. If, therefore, at this time progress was made, and the arts and sciences, hitherto much neglected, began to flourish, the impulse came from the intelligence of the nation, not from its king. The arts, *les belles lettres*, taste, manners, religion, received not their impress from him until a later date; but his influence on them was then supreme.

CHAPTER XIV.

Madame de Sévigné's Letters to M. de Pomponne.—Fouquet's Casket of Billets-doux.—The Letters from Sévigné.—Her Appeal to her Friends.—Devotion in Friendship.—Mazarin's Peculations. — Colbert's Hatred of Fouquet. — Sévigné's Deep Emotion. — Pélisson's Pleadings. — Eloquence and Pathos.—Fouquet's Sentence.—Perpetual Imprisonment.—The Fortress of Pignerol.—The North and the South.—Woman's Privilege.

MONGST the numerous letters written by, or attributed to Madame de Sévigné, none possess greater interest than those of November and December, 1664, addressed to M. de Pomponne, during the trial of Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle. Colbert, who sought with the avidity of jealous hate for proof, or anything that could be construed into proof, however small, if it would help to substantiate the charge of embezzling the finances of the state, and bring the accused to the scaffold, had caused not only the papers at Vaux and at his house at St. Mandé to be seized, but also those of several of his

intimate friends. A casket confided to the care of Madame du Plessis-Bellière fell into his hands. The Chancellor, Le Tellier, and the king examined it together; but found, instead of the documents they were in search of, a number of letters from the marquis's wide circle of fair correspondents. So tenderly had some of these ladies expressed themselves, that the virtuous indignation of the king, naturally, was roused by it. It seemed to him a further infringement of his sovereign rights; for many of the brightest *belles* of his court had contributed to Fouquet's collection of *billets-doux*. And apparently they were more solicitous to obtain his favour than he to win their smiles; which may have been owing to the lavish profusion with which the magnificent *surintendant* was accustomed to make presents of pearls and diamonds, and, at times, to lend money to *les grandes dames* who had got into difficulties by playing at *hoca* —the fashionable game, at which many of the nobility lost their estates and often entirely ruined themselves.

To rouse the indignation of the public, whose feeling inclined more towards the *surintendant* than towards his accusers, the numerous base intrigues these letters suggested rather than

prove l were allowed, to a certain extent, to become generally known. Society must have been dreadfully scandalized at such a revelation, considering how pure its own morals were. In Fouquet's casket of *lettres galantes* were found several lively epistles from the Marquise de Sévigné. Although Le Tellier himself informed her cousin, Count de Bussy-Rabutin, that both he and the king had regarded them merely as the letters of "*une amie très spirituelle*" —Fouquet alone being to blame for having "*mal àpropos mêlé l'amour avec l'amitié*"—yet the name of Madame de Sévigné, in connection with that of the unfortunate state prisoner, began to be bandied about the city, according to the custom of the time, in jests and songs, more malignant and offensive than witty.*

* Le Comte de Bussy-Rabutin was himself committed to the Bastille in the course of the following year, and detained there eighteen months. His book, "Les Amours des Gaules," which had given extreme offence to the persons satirized in it, and amongst whom he did not scruple to put Madame de Sévigné, was the pretext. His satirical song, or hymn, "Alleluia," in which he very audaciously—considering the servile adulation then in vogue—alluded to the amours of "Déodatus"—Dieu-donné being the epithet applied to Louis XIV. at his birth—was the real cause of his incarceration. "Les Amours des Gaules," however, was published without his knowledge by the Marquise de la Baume, to whom he had confided the MS., and who sent it to Holland to be printed.

The marquise appealed to Ménage and Chapelain; men of repute and influence, the friends of her youth, who had had a large part in her education, and now did their best to silence those malicious reports against a woman of unsullied reputation. She was annoyed that Fouquet should have placed her letters "*dans la casette de ses poulets*," but rejoiced on having "*jamais voulu rien chercher ni trouver dans sa bourse.*" She was, therefore, the better able to prove herself the steadfast friend she was to him in misfortune.

"When in Brittany, Madame de Sévigné had been a frequent participator in the pleasures of the brilliant *réunions* at that palace of *les beaux arts et les belles lettres*, le Château de Vaux. Fouquet, like Turenne and the Prince de Conti, had been of the number of her admirers when, in years gone by, she had reappeared in the *beau monde* as a young widow. Bussy confesses that he, too, sought to find more favour in her eyes than his relationship merely entitled him to look for; also "*qu'elle trouvait moyen de les éconduire tous, en badinant.*" It appears, however, that with the fascinating marquis, something more than a jest was needed to dismiss him. He was per-

severing in his attentions, and many precautions were necessary in order to escape from them. At last, she says, he became weary of continuing what seemed so useless a pursuit, "*et, faute de mieux,* was content to accept the friendship she offered him."

Napoleon I., after reading her letters to M. de Pomponne during the trial of Fouquet, remarked that "*l'intérêt de Madame de Sévigné était bien chaud, bien vif, bien tendre, pour de la simple amitié.*" It was one of those friendships that woman does occasionally feel for man—deep, true, devoted, and unselfish, and far more enduring than love.

With what anguish of mind she followed, day by day, the proceedings of the mock tribunal, or "*bureau de commission!*" It was composed of twenty-two persons—judges, members of the council of state, and of the parliament—some of whom raved, raged, and insulted their prisoner when they perceived that his explanations, his quiet dignity, and forcible eloquence when allowed to speak, were making a favourable impression, alike on those who were present to condemn him, and those who attended merely to hear his defence. When questioned on the subject of his immense expenditure, he asserted,

and desired to be allowed to prove, that the reckless extravagance he was charged with having indulged in at the expense of the state, was quite within what his own means permitted. But all papers were withheld from him; they had been thoroughly examined by his enemies—the king, Colbert, and his clique—and only those that told against him were produced.

All that could be done—and his most sanguine friends hoped to do no more than save his life—to prevail on the king to be merciful, to propitiate the judges, to bribe those who were willing to take bribes—and few were found in those days to refuse them—was for three years unremittingly and unswervingly persisted in.

Certain branches of the revenue had been wholly appropriated by Mazarin. He had drawn enormous sums yearly for secret expenses, exacted commission on all stores provided for the equipment of the army, and otherwise pilfered in every department of the government. He was accustomed to buy for a trifle any quantity of old discredited government bills (*"vieux billets décriés"*), as if to withdraw them from the hands of the public,

but in reality to present them to the *surintendant des finances* for payment in full. For these and other depredations of the all-powerful cardinal on the finances of the state, Fouquet was arraigned. Having allowed them made him, in some degree, a participator in the cardinal's crime. But whether he could or could not say anything in self-justification mattered not at all; for Colbert hated him, the king hated him, and, whatever the convictions of his judges, acquittal was impossible. Yet all France was waiting in trembling, breathless, expectation for his sentence.

The prisoner himself was more calm, resigned, cheerful, and self-possessed than any of his friends. Madame de Sévigné was persuaded to accompany some ladies to a house looking directly into the court of the arsenal, across which Fouquet had to pass from the council chamber after having been interrogated. She went masked, not desiring that her "*pauvre ami*" should recognize her. M. d'Artagnan (who had charge of him, was beside him, and at twenty or thirty paces distant, a guard of fifty *mousquetaires* followed. He had a very pensive air. "As for me," she says, "when I first perceived him, my limbs trembled, and my

heart beat so violently that I could scarcely support myself. As he approached, and was about to enter his den (*trou*), M. d'Artagnan directed his attention to us. He immediately looked up, and, with that pleasant, smiling expression you know so well, saluted us. I do not think he recognized me; but I confess that I was strangely affected when I saw him pass through that low, narrow doorway." The only hope of Madame de Sévigné was in the ability, impartiality, and integrity, of M. d'Ormesson, the chief "*rapporteur*" in the case, and on whom it first devolved to recapitulate and comment on the evidence, and to give his own vote, either for life or death. It was supposed that the recapitulation would occupy him not less than a week. "*Entre-ci et là*," she exclaims, "*ce n'est pas vivre; je ne crois pas que je puisse aller jusque-là.*"

Quite as much interested for Pélisson, and scarcely less so for Fouquet, was Mademoiselle de Scudéry. After two years of constant endeavour, she obtained from Colbert permission for Madame Pélisson to see her son. The like small favour all her efforts failed to secure for Fouquet. Referring afterwards to this celebrated state trial, she says that she had burnt more than

five hundred letters on the subject, and that she herself had written a larger number while the prisoners were in the Bastille. To her, the family of the marquis, and many of his friends, resorted for comfort. Madame de Sévigné often refers to her. "*Sapho, dont l'esprit et la pénétration n'ont point de bornes,*" consoled her.

Pélisson, the secretary, who was of less importance than the wealthy and fascinating *surintendant*, but for his fidelity to him would have been released. He was four years and a half in the Bastille, and had the courage to publish three discourses or pleadings addressed to the king in defence of his chief.

These discourses have been pronounced models of judiciary eloquence, unequalled in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Yet they were not the productions of a lawyer, the pleadings of a barrister, or even judicial memoirs. They were inspired by the courage of true friendship for one who, from a high and influential position, had fallen into misfortune, and display great oratorical talent, animated by zeal to avert the danger threatening the accused. Voltaire compared them to the pleadings of Cicero. And, according to the opinion of La Harpe, when this testimony to their excellence was

given, there existed nothing at all approaching them in eloquence in modern writings of the kind, or that, beside them, could be put in comparison with the discourses of the ancient orators. He admires the style, the noble sentiments and ideas, the close connection of the proofs adduced, and their lucid explanation; the force of the reasonings, and the art with which a vein of subdued satire running through them is used to strengthen the orator's arguments. With much skill and address, it is made to appear that the king's glory is interested in absolving the accused. Many other beauties are noticed—the sublimity of the thoughts, and the extreme pathos of the peroration especially addressed to the king.

But Pélisson expended his rhetoric in vain on so ignorant and selfish a despot. It was like casting pearls before swine. La Fontaine pleaded also for his friend Fouquet in a poetical address, and many others employed their pens zealously in the work of intercession with more or less force and feeling. The king's only remark on this demonstration in favour of Fouquet was, "*Le Marquis de Belle Isle est un homme dangereux.*" It inflamed, too, the hatred of Colbert and his party; and the sentence of the

commission, severe as it was, as it fell short of death, enraged them still more. "Banishment and confiscation," said M. d'Ormesson. "A gibbet and a rope are his due," said Pussort, Colbert's uncle; "but as he is of a distinguished family, let him lose his head." A majority of three confirmed Ormesson's sentence.

"*Louez Dieu! notre pauvre ami est sauvé!*" exclaimed Madame de Sévigné, as she despatched her courier, who, during the trial, was constantly on the road between Paris and Livry with the latest intelligence for M. de Pomponne, almost as much interested as herself in the result. But a disappointment still awaited her. There was a chance, she believed, of bidding adieu to her friend before leaving his country. Some even thought that a pardon would come from the king at the last moment. The poor little queen had been entreated by the Countess de Vaux, Fouquet's mother, to intercede for her son, and great hopes were built upon it. For she had earned the profound gratitude of Maria Theresa, whom she found suffering intensely from a fit of the vapours, by sending her a plaster which had so effectually cured her, that it was looked upon almost as a miracle, and Madame Fouquet as a

saint. Madame de Sévigné was, however, less sanguine. "*Je connais trop*," she remarked, "*des tendresses de ce pays là.*" Yet she was inclined to draw comfort from the length of the tail of a comet that was visible at that time, and that was generally believed to have had great influence on the trial, both for good and for evil, as wishes or opinions on the subject varied.

The rage of Colbert was so excessive at his victim's escape from the scaffold, and the probability of his finding, in spite of the confiscation of the whole of his property, an honourable asylum in some other country, that "something atrocious was looked for." The king, too, was extremely disappointed. Even he could scarcely venture to pass sentence of death upon one whom a majority of the persons appointed by himself to try the accused had spared. He therefore disposed of the difficulty by striking out "banishment," and writing in its place "perpetual imprisonment." The wife was refused permission to share her husband's prison, and was banished, with his mother and other near relatives, to distant parts of France.

Poor Madame de Sévigné! She had to moderate her transports; but she was not one of those who grieve long—"*son sourire était bien*

près de ses larmes." "What she would have become, she knew not," she said; "whether she could have survived, she doubted, had Fouquet been condemned to death. But his life is spared, "*qui est une grande affaire;*" banishment is changed to imprisonment, "*qui est une grande rigueur. Mais ayons du courage; il faut mettre sa confiance en Dieu et laisser notre pauvre cher ami sous sa protection.*" Fouquet was imprisoned in the fortress of Pignerol, a guard of fifty soldiers placed over him, and generally he was treated with much severity. While on his journey there arose a report that he had been taken ill; immediately there was an outcry—"*Déjà! déjà!*" It, however, proved to be a false rumour, originating in the general belief that, although Fouquet had escaped the scaffold, poison awaited him in his dungeon at Pignerol. He is supposed to have died there in 1680; but it has been asserted, by Gourville and others, that he left it shortly before his death. His grandson, the Marquis de Belle Isle, was a distinguished general in the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. He was that Maréchal de France who had the conduct of the war against the empress-queen, Maria Theresa, in the reign of Louis XV.

The office of *surintendant des finances* was abolished, or rather the holder of it was styled *controlleur-général et secrétaire d'état*, instead of *surintendant*, and the subordinate posts of *controlleurs*, which existed under the *surintendant*, were done away with. All who had been employed under Fouquet were dismissed, and subjected either to a part confiscation of their property, heavy fines, or a term of imprisonment, and the grand Colbert reigned. In the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné and M. de Pomponne he is called "*Petit*," with reference to the baseness of his conduct towards Fouquet. With equal truth, too, she called him "the North," and the man he so hated "the South;" and no doubt they were in character "far as the poles asunder." Colbert, austere, hard, cold, prudent, scrupulous, severe, a great financier and stern man of business; Fouquet, genial in disposition, generous, *spirituel*, a lover and patron of *les belles lettres* and *les beaux arts;* full of grace and politeness, and a true kindliness of heart that won for him the sincere affection of a host of friends, as well as the esteem of the people amongst whom he lived.

Colbert, no doubt, had great and manifold merits, and justly to record them may safely be

left to the impartial pen of the grave historian. The pen of woman (not always strictly impartial, being often under the uncontrolled guidance of feeling) finds a more congenial theme in extolling the less rugged virtues, the gentler and more engaging qualities, that distinguished the unfortunate victim of envy and malice—the brilliant and fascinating Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle.

"*Les femmes*," as Madame de Sévigné truly says, "*ont permission d'être faibles, et elles se servent sans scrupule de ce privilège.*"

CHAPTER XV.

The Salons Nevers and Mazarin.—St. Evremond's Letter.—St. Evremond Escapes.—A Welcome in England.—The Hôtel de Nevers.—Madame Des Houlières.—Poems of Madame Des Houlières.—Her Rescue from Prison.—Satirical Sonnet on "Phèdre."—A Duel seems Inevitable.—Rachel, as Phèdre.—The Brothers Corneille.—First Plays of Racine.—Like Coffee, find no Favour.—"Le Misanthrope."—"Les Femmes Savantes."—Théâtre du Palais Royal, 1666.—Molière in Ninon's Salon.—"Tartuffoli! Signor Nuncio."

HE Hôtels Nevers and Mazarin re-opened their *salons* with great *éclat* after Fouquet was safely lodged in the fortress of Pignerol. Fears had been entertained that the disclosures at his trial might rouse popular indignation against the cardinal's heirs, and perhaps to such a height that to suppress it, it would be necessary to order restitution to be made to the coffers of the state of some portion of the spoil with which Mazarin had enriched himself and his Italian peasant family. Profligacy, under the name of "*Mœurs Italiennes*," reigned in those splendid *salons*, in

those of the Hôtel de Bouillon and of the Countess de Soissons, at the Louvre, and wherever a member of that group of Sicilians presided. *Les bien-séances,* as understood at the court of Louis XIV., were allowed a very wide field to range in; but the Italians, in their love of freedom, allowed them or themselves greater latitude still.

One brilliant member of their circle was, however, permanently lost to them—the witty epicurean, philosopher, St. Evremond, who had been a constant frequenter of the Hôtel Mazarin, as well as of the *spirituel,* if rather lax, society that assembled at Ninon's. While examining the private papers of Fouquet—in which the king took great delight, from a petty curiosity he had acquired when frequenting the idle and gossiping *coterie* of his mother and her ladies—Louis met with a letter, or the copy of one, from St. Evremond to the Duc de Créqui, giving an amusing and satirical account of the cardinal's conduct of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and of the questions of precedence and etiquette which retarded its completion. It was a mere *jeu d'esprit,* but Louis had resolved to put down such presumptuous scribblers, and St. Evremond was only saved from joining

Bussy-Rabutin in the Bastille by a hint he received from a friend of the lodging then in preparation for him. He fled to Holland, thence to England, where, in the congenial atmosphere of Charles's libertine court, he found an asylum and a cordial welcome. De Grammont and other friends endeavoured, from time to time, to induce the king to pardon an offence which, it was believed, the cardinal himself would scarcely have resented. But Louis chose to regard it as an act of treachery towards a minister, in whose service and confidence he was at the time it was written.

Thirty years after, St. Evremond received permission to return to France. He declined to avail himself of it. A new generation, he said, had sprung up since he left, and he would be "leaving old and sincere friends, accustomed to his wen, to go amongst strangers. For but two or three of the friends of former days were still living, and they—with the exception of De Grammont—would no longer find in his face any resemblance to the one they had before been familiar with." His friend Ninon, too, persuaded in vain. His correspondence with her had been constant, and it continued till his death. She kept him *au courant* of all

that was going on at the court; gave him the gossip of Parisian society, and any other information she thought likely to interest or amuse him. Some of her letters are bright and lively, in others, she is, at times, too much disposed to philosophize. But like French women generally, of any education, she wielded a very *facile* pen. He was accustomed to recommend his friends to her when visiting Paris—often ladies of distinction; amongst others Lady Sandwich, the daughter of Rochester, who is said to have very greatly admired and esteemed her.*

But if St. Evremond was absent, there was no lack of philosophers of the same school to take his place, or, indeed, of the *beau monde* generally to fill the *salons* whose society was thought so corrupt, that even the court frowned upon it. This, however, was in the latter days of the queen-mother, whose piety increased as she drew nearer to her end. She was then sincerely grieved, and much troubled in mind, at the immoralities of the king, though she had so largely contributed to make him what he was —suppressing the good in his character, and fostering the evil.

* St. Evremond died in 1703, at the age of ninety, three years before Mademoiselle de Lenclos, who attained the same age. He was honoured with a grave in Westminster Abbey.

The Hôtel de Nevers made greater pretensions to literary distinction than the Hôtel Mazarin. The duke himself wrote verses; his most admired ones were on the work of the Abbé Rancé, of La Trappe celebrity, in refutation of Fénélon's "Maximes des Saints." At the Hôtel de Nevers the idyls and pastorals of Madame Des Houlières—afterwards so greatly renowned—were first read, and the verses of the youthful Mademoiselle Chéron; still more distinguished for her musical talent and for her success as an artist. She was a pupil of Le Brun, and through his recommendation was elected a member of the Academy of Painting. Several large historical pictures, and some portraits of her contemporaries—that of Archbishop Péréfixe, who wrote the life of Henry IV., and the only portrait known to exist of Madame Des Houlières—were painted by her.

These and other celebrities, including Molière, and Madame de la Sablière—who had not yet entirely withdrawn from the world—together with La Fontaine, who followed wherever Madame de la Sablière led, gave a certain literary *éclat* to the Hôtel de Nevers. Of the poetesses of her day, Madame Des Houlières is now the best known; though by name, pro-

bably even in France, more than through her works, with the exception of certain sentences and short passages that have passed into proverbs. She wrote songs, epigrams, sonnets, odes, idyls, and even tragedies. In tragedy she was less successful than in her graceful pastorals, on which her fame rests. Her heroic personages discourse far less naturally than her shepherds and shepherdesses. But charming Phyllis and Strephon, and their bleating young lambs, are gone out of fashion in poetry, though still much sought after in porcelaine. Their simple occupations, and the *naïveté* of their prattlings on friendship and love, are not to the taste of this sophisticated age. It is wonderful, indeed, that "*ces réveries d'un cœur tendre et sensible*" should have met with so enthusiastic a reception from the dissolute society for whom they were written.

Madame Des Houlières had many imitators, but none who approached her either in the harmony of her flowing verse, or the tenderness and beauty of her thoughts. She had the true poetic faculty; a rare gift in that verse-writing age, and possessed almost exclusively by herself and the two or three great dramatic poets of France. A book of proverbs in verse might be

compiled from her poems. For instance, the following lines on one of the most prevalent vices of the *beau monde* of the period—gambling:

"Les plaisirs sont amers, sitôt qu'on en abuse ;
Il est bon de jouer un peu,
Mais il faut seulement que le jeu nous amuse.
Un joueur, d'un commun aveu,
N'a rien humain que l'apparence,
Et d'ailleurs il n'est pas si facile qu'on pense.
D'être fort honnête homme et de jouer gros jeu ;
Le désir de gagner, qui nuit et jour l'occupe,
Est un dangereux aiguillon,
Souvent, quoique l'esprit, quoique le cœur soit bon.
On commence par être dupe,
On finit par être fripon."

And again :

"L'amour-propre est, hélas ! le plus sot des amours ;
Cependant des erreurs il est la plus commune.
Quelque puissant qu'on soit en richesse, en credit,
Quelque mauvais succès qu'ait tout ce qu'on écrit.
Nul n'est content de sa fortune,
Ni mécontent de son esprit."

Madame Des Houlières wrote in Spanish and Italian with as much facility as in French. She was beautiful, too. The Great Condé, who was not remarkable for his devotion to the fair sex, had sighed at her feet, and sighed in vain. M. Des Houlières and Mademoiselle du Ligier were then one of the few couples who had married for love. She was seventeen when in 1651 their marriage took place. Her husband,

attached to the Grand Condé, took part in his rebellion, and in his absence his young wife was seized and conveyed to one of the prisons of state. As soon as he was informed of it he left the rebel camp, and, by means of bribes, entered the fortress disguised as a Royalist soldier, and, in a similar disguise, carried off his wife. They both shared the exile of Condé, and returned to France with him when the amnesty, as stipulated by the Treaty of the Pyrenees, was granted in 1660.

With his pardon, some post in the government was also bestowed on M. Des Houlières, and the poetess—then twenty-seven—by her beauty and her genius (she was called the tenth muse) soon shone as a bright star in literary and fashionable society. Some years after, she was accused of endeavouring to bring ridicule on Racine's grand tragedy of "Phèdre," by a satirical sonnet, written after witnessing its first representation, "Is it not enough," says Voltaire, in reference to this sonnet, "that women should show jealousy in love; must their jealousy extend even to the *belles lettres*?" It was made to appear that it was the actress who played Aricie, and who was enormously stout, for whom the satire was really intended. The

sonnet, however, was near causing a duel. It was printed and distributed in the *salons,* but its author's name was withheld. As Nevers frequently exercised his brilliant pen in scribbling sonnets, the authorship of this one was immediately assigned to him, and the more readily as he had had the folly to extol the mediocre productions of Pradon, and to set them above the tragedies of Racine. A few days after another sonnet appeared, parodying the first, and very pointedly ridiculing the duke's poetical effusions. This—again erroneously—was attributed to Racine and his friend Boileau, and although it was repudiated by them, Nevers, stung to the quick by the irritating nature of the satire, publicly declared that he "would have those two poets soundly flogged."

This coming to the ears of Monsieur le Duc —the son of the Grand Condé—a great patron of letters, and the friend of Racine and Boileau, he declared himself their protector, and informed the Duc de Nevers that any insults offered to them he should look upon as offered to himself. And further, until the sonneteers should explain and apologize, or the affair be settled by a hostile meeting, Monsieur le Duc announced that he had invited the poets to take up their resi-

dence in his palace. The court, as well as all the *salons* of Paris, was occupied in discussing the mystery of the authorship of the sonnets. Various poets were named, but no satisfactory conclusion was arrived at. The mystery gave piquancy to the quarrel, and made it even more exciting than when society was divided into two hostile camps, and disputes ran high on the respective merits of the sonnets of Bensérade and Voiture.

The two dukes, meanwhile, had so undisguisedly expressed feelings of mutual contempt that a duel was looked upon as inevitable, and Madame Des Houlières, alarmed at the threatening aspect the affair had assumed, resolved to declare herself the original offender. Immediately, Monsieur le Duc removed his hand from the hilt of the sword which he had been about to draw. But the Duc de Nevers vowed that his sword should not rest in its scabbard, when, following the example set by the lady, a party of young men, amongst whom were the Comte de Fiesque and the Chevalier de Nantouillet, confessed themselves the avengers of Racine; also, that one and all, with either pistols or swords, were ready to give satisfaction to the Duc de Nevers if he felt the retort unprovoked and

himself aggrieved. The duke, who thought, as his uncle had often thought before him, that "discretion was the better part of valour," declared himself far less aggrieved than amused.

Society laughed and clapped its hands, when the farce was ended, and "Damon," as the sonneteers called the duke, retired to "*son palais doré faire des vers où jamais personne n'entend rien.*" The only person to whom the *mauvaise plaisanterie* of Madame Des Houlières did any real harm, was the "grosse Aricie," who excited so much laughter when she made her appearance that she felt compelled to give up the part. The scene with Phèdre, probably gained in effect when a less portly person assumed the character. But who that ever saw the gifted Rachel in her tragic grandeur, as Phèdre, remarked whether her *confidente* Aricie was fat or thin? Yet La Champmeslé, who first played the part of Phèdre, was a very great actress. There were many, however, who, while admiring her talent, like Madame de Sévigné, failed to appreciate the genius of Racine, and many more who, from jealousy, were unwilling to recognize it. In the opinion of most persons, Madame Des Houlières was of the number of the latter.

The coterie of poets that, in 1664, assembled twice or thrice weekly at the house of Boileau Despréaux, included Pierre Corneille and his brother Thomas, who was nineteen years his junior, and in some sort both the pupil and the rival of the elder dramatist. He wrote thirty-four plays, being one in excess of the number written by his brother. But genius inspired Pierre, and the success of Pierre inspired Thomas. Yet many sublime passages may be found in his works; his tragedy of "Ariane" is considered his masterpiece—the subject being pathetic, the sentiments noble and often eloquently expressed. The fame of Pierre Corneille —the Peter the Great of French tragedy—rests chiefly, as is known, on his earlier works—"Le Cid," "Cinna," "Les Horaces," "Polyeucte," and detached scenes in "Radogune," "Pompée," etc. Some critics have adjudged the palm of excellence to "Les Horaces," as far as the first three acts—what follows forming almost a distinct play, destroying the interest of the first. Of all his tragedies, it is the one most entirely the creation of his own genius, and in which its grandeur and sublimity are most strikingly apparent—there being little that is dramatic in the subject itself.

Molière was one of Boileau's society of poets, also young Racine—"L'immortel Jean," as Voltaire calls him—who sat at the feet of the elder dramatists, seeking approbation and encouragement, which Boileau, alone, had the discernment and disinterestedness heartily to give him. His first tragedy—"Théogene"—he gave to Molière, who furnished him with the subject of his second attempt—"Les Frères ennemis" But neither had any marked success. His third—"Alexandre"—Corneille thought so ill of that he earnestly advised him to write no more. Chapelain corrected those first efforts of Racine—Chapelain, who had so signally failed as a poet himself, was an excellent critic. But "Alexandre," like its predecessors, excited little interest. Then came "Andromaque," and, though envy and prejudice did their best to decry, and to put down, this rising genius, it was felt that, in depicting the passions, a greater than Corneille had arisen. It is possible that the later plays of Corneille may owe something of their extreme inferiority to his earlier ones, to a feeling of discouragement, arising from a consciousness of the superiority of his rival, rather than from any premature decay of his powers. Yet the public voice continued in his

favour; and, as if fearing that the great reputation of the "father of French dramatic poetry" was imperilled by the success of the younger dramatist, refused to confirm the judgment of the few who were found to appreciate the merits of Racine. Even when increased favour was accorded to his plays, a large part of society declared that it would prove to be a mere passing caprice. Coffee, it appears, was introduced to the notice of the *beau monde* of Paris at about the same time as were Racine's tragedies, and found as much difficulty as the poet in securing its suffrage. Of both it was pronounced, "*qu'ils n'iroient pas loin;*" yet by the force of their respective merits both permanently established themselves in the estimation of all classes.

The best plays of Molière were the least well-received by the public. "Le Misanthrope" was played but four times. It was not generally understood. It was intended—as has been asserted—to read a lesson to the Duc de Montausier, who never scrupled to tell the king his mind, whether likely to prove agreeable to his godship or not. He attended its first representation, and was to learn from it that a little suavity of manner was not incompatible with

great wisdom and rigid virtue. Molière put into the mouth of the Misanthrope many expressions which the duke was accustomed to use, and referred also to many of his known peculiarities, in order to make the picture more striking. But after witnessing it, though he knew from unmistakable hints that had been given him, that in the Misanthrope he was the person aimed at, he pronounced it "by no means offensive, and a very good play." So it is evident, the duke did not see himself as others, or at least as Molière, saw him, or if he did that he liked the picture.

The same cold reception was given to "Les Femmes savantes." The subject was a dreary one, and five acts on so sterile a theme as a pretension to learning and *esprit* (exhausted already in "Les Précieuses ridicules") were considered more than human patience could bear. There was a prejudice against it before it was produced, and the merits of the piece failed to create a reaction in its favour. What is said in it on the subject of education is taken, almost word for word, from "Le Grand Cyrus" of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, written several years before. A small section of *les grandes dames* had become at that period less desirous to shine

in the *salons* by their *esprit* and agreeable conversation, than to be distinguished in literary circles for the profundity of their learning. It was the fashion to acquire some knowledge of Greek and Latin, to be interested in scientific subjects, and deeply versed in the metaphysics of Descartes. Some ladies whom the gambling-table had compelled to many retrenchments, in order to retrieve their losses, solaced themselves by employing their leisure in the study of astronomy. This was a change for the better, no doubt; but, often, confusing astronomy with astrology, it was studied with a view to searching into futurity rather than for a more enlightened acquaintance with the starry heavens.

The pursuits and studies of these learned ladies were regarded as a censure on the frivolous pastimes of the court. Molière, therefore, resolved to satirize and ridicule them.

"*Ce n'était pas*," says Roederer, "*le spectacle de la société qu'inspirait la comédie 'Les Femmes savantes.' Molière voulait attaquer pour plaire au roi une société qui, puissante dans l'opinion, gagnait tous les jours dans l'esprit du roi lui-même. Il était embarrassé et a manqué ici de son but.*" Molière gained more popularity with the people when he descended to low comedy,

in such pieces as "Les Fourberies de Scapin," "M. de Pourceaugnac," etc. Only buffoonery, and vulgar jests, that raised loud laughter, pleased the groundlings; and even his more refined audiences had scarcely sufficient culture, and perception of humour, to detect and appreciate the covert satire running through the dialogue in several of his best plays.

Yet the play must have been good, indeed, to have afforded a mixed audience much pleasure, with the *mise-en-scène* customary in the days of Molière. The *salle,* terribly cold unless well filled, was lighted only by a few wretched tallow candles; two candle-snuffers being constantly employed in preventing their dim, smoky glare from making the darkness more visible than the players. Six poor scraping fiddlers formed the orchestra—for the royal bands, of twelve and twenty-four, *en grande tenue,* were in requisition only when "La troupe du roi," as Molière's company of players was now called, played before the king. A privileged part of the audience sat on the stage, which was encumbered with benches and chairs for the accommodation of those grandees; whose frequent exits—for refreshment at the *buffets* in front of the theatre, and at the entrances—usually

distracting the attention at some interesting part of the play, were extremely confusing. Such were the arrangements when the Duc de Montausier witnessed the first representation of "Le Misanthrope" on May 30, 1666. But considering how fanciful was the costume of the gay gallants who figured so prominently on the stage of that day, they may have given picturesqueness to the scene, when "they stood about grouped in careless attitudes," like supernumeraries of the modern stage, who represent the ancient barons, bold warriors, daring brigands, or happy villagers.

One can imagine that it must have been far more pleasing and satisfactory to hear Molière read his own plays; as he frequently did to a brilliant and *spirituel* audience in Mademoiselle de Lenclos' well-lighted *salon*—"on the walls of which the history of Psyche was painted, in panels; the intervening spaces being filled with Venetian mirrors."

Molière, and Ninon, and Madame de la Sablière are said to have consulted more than once together to devise an appropriate title for the play afterwards named "Tartuffe." This title, as probably everybody knows, suggested itself to Molière (if the anecdote may be relied

upon), when, one day, some affairs took him to the residence of the Nuncio. Two extremely devout-looking ecclesiastics, apparently wrapped in profound meditation, were in the apartment. A basket of truffles happened to be brought in as an offering to his Eminence, whose attention at the moment was engaged. One of the priests, however, saw the savoury roots. His eyes gleamed with delight, and forgetting his *rôle* of devotee, he jumped up, exclaiming, "Tartuffoli! Signor Nuncio, Tartuffoli!" Molière, ever observant, was struck by this sudden change from a severely pious air to a gloating one over a basket of truffles, and it occurred to him that Tartuffe would be a happy designation for his still unchristened impostor.

CHAPTER XVI.

Death of Anne of Austria.—Bossuet, Évêque de Condom.—Le Grand Monarque.—Louis' Preference for Versailles.—His Numerous Court.—The Satirist of the Fronde.—La Princesse d'Élide.—The Fêtes of 1667.—An Address to the Sun.—Versailles in its Glory.—A Grand Promenade.—The Sun and the Lesser Lights.—The Court and the Salons.—A Confidential Secretary.—L'Appartement du Roi.—Social Freedom.

THE sufferings of Anne of Austria* terminated in death in 1666. So great had been her influence over her son, that he never probably, until that event happened, felt himself wholly exempt from control. Much affection for his indolent, indulgent mother, and great delight in her society, he had from childhood constantly evinced; and it was this filial disposition, the best trait in his character, that so long impelled him to show deference, and respect, towards the man she had taught him to reverence as a father. Her funeral oration was pronounced by

* She died of cancer.

Bossuet. It was his first, and his least happy effort, in that branch of pulpit oratory in which he afterwards so greatly excelled. He was, however, rewarded with the bishopric of Condom, though the oration was not published, nor at that time had any of his sermons been printed.

After the queen-mother's funeral, the king left the Tuileries for the Château of St. Germain, which at one time seemed likely to become his favourite residence. Versailles could not vie with it in beauty of situation, and its hanging gardens, which Sir Christopher Wren mentions with so much admiration, were picturesque as the grounds that surrounded it. But Versailles had the advantage, in Louis' opinion, of being at a greater distance from Paris, and more out of the way of any possible *émeute*. The people were disappointed that the king absented himself so continually from his capital. But the Fronde and the indignities of his minority, were never forgotten by Louis XIV., and never forgiven; and he now rejected Paris, as the Parisians in his boyish days had rejected him. His visits were always short, and for the purpose, most frequently, of humiliating the parliament and annulling the ancient privileges of that assembly;

in which the refractory spirit of the Fronde was not yet wholly extinguished.

Louis' fondness for walking, and for the chase, also led him to give preference to a residence where such habits and tastes could be more conveniently followed than in the city. Besides, should he too frequently be seen by the people, and his sacred person become a familiar object to the eyes of the vulgar, might they not fail to regard him with that reverential awe it was his aim to inspire in all classes of his subjects? He exacted extraordinary homage from all who approached him; and they who enjoyed that supreme felicity, found it to their interest to be so overpowered by the majesty of his presence, his grand air, and solemn pomposity, that, frequently, they feigned to be struck dumb, as it were, before him, or at best only able to address him with "bated breath and whispering humbleness." Had he spat upon them, there were many among his favourites and flatterers so grovelling in spirit that they would have humbly thanked him for such courtesy. To the multitude he was as grand a mystery as the "veiled prophet;" they were dazzled by the magnificence and splendour, far surpassing the royal state of any of his predecessors, with

which he surrounded himself and screened his vices from vulgar eyes.

The squabbles of Louis' bevy of mistresses, of whom La Vallière, created Duchess de Vaujour, was then "*Maîtresse en titre*," formed another reason for removing the court from Paris. He would not allow the brightness of his glory—and he was anxious to keep it resplendently bright—to be dimmed by such scandals going the round of the *salons*, and becoming the subjects of songs and epigrams, for the amusement of the populace and the licentious wits of the day. Even the vices of the sovereign must be invested with an air of solemnity and grandeur, and varnished over with a thick coating of stately politeness.

Versailles was fast growing into a small province, of which the palace was the capital; and the king's attachment, to this vast, ill-designed edifice, grew as the palace increased in size; as its gardens, lakes, and fountains increased in extent and number, and as the court was more numerously attended. Perrault continued working, *con amore*, at the grand entrance *façade* of the Louvre; but the new pavilion and some other proposed additions to the Tuileries were left incomplete, all hands being needed for Ver-

sailles. In 1664 the number of persons composing the court was above six hundred, exclusive of attendants, and the people employed in arranging the fancy *fêtes*. These *fêtes* were intended so greatly to outvie in splendour the still-talked-of brilliant festivities of Vaux, that no comparison should be possible with them. They were given, as if in mockery of the misery of the starving people, at a time when both the capital and the provinces were suffering, from one of those terrible visitations of famine, and sickness, so frequent in the seventeenth century. In 1666 the court had so greatly increased, "ancient *frondeurs* having become *fins courtisans*," that Versailles had to accommodate, or in some way to shelter, nearly a thousand persons.

Towards those nobles, and their families, who had taken any part in fomenting the troubles of the Fronde, in Paris, or the revolt in the provinces, Louis was implacable. Notwithstanding the amnesty, if they desired to be reinstated in his favour they must show it, very plainly, by the most humble submissiveness, and a readiness at all times to fall down and worship him, and to lick the dust from his feet. To have been the author of an epigram, or silly *jeu*

d'esprit, that possibly had raised a laugh against the court, was, in his eyes, treason of no light kind. But so open was he to flattery—and no incense could be too strong for him—that the crime might be expiated by adulatory sonnets, heroic odes, or pastorals in which, alluding to the king and his *amours*, sentimental shepherds and shepherdesses described in inflated verse the godlike beauty of some sylvan Apollo, and the havoc he had made of the hearts of the languishing love-sick Daphnes and Chloes, who tended their flocks on the same hills.

Pensions, or "*gratifications*," were sure to fall into the lap of those poets, or other writers, who could mockingly and wittily hold up to laughter and derision "*la vieille société de la Fronde*," or those traces of it that were supposed still to survive. Some French writers* have considered the plays of Molière, who, of all the poets of the time, was the most favoured by Louis XIV., as one continuous satire on the period of the Fronde, and the pretensions of the Frondeurs. "*Tous ces marquis provinciaux, Rodomonts de castels, ne sont-ils pas l'amère critique de l'esprit provincial qui domina l'époque*

* Victor Cousin, J. B. Capefigue, Roederer, etc.

de la Fronde? Ces ridicules jetés sur les bourgeois qui veulent s'élever et s'occuper d'autre chose que de leur ménage; ces moqueries sur tout ce qui n'est pas le cour, n'est ce pas un service d'écrivain aux gages de la volonté et des intérêts de Louis XIV.?" "C'est la plume politique qui a le mieux compris la situation de la couronne; les ennemis qu'elle avait à combattre; les moqueries qu'elle avait à répandre et à sémer."

Molière's allegorical play, "La Princesse d'Élide," and the farce of "Le Mariage forcé," were written for the *fêtes* of 1664; and the first three acts of "Tartuffe" were played, that the king might give his opinion of the comedy before it was finished. Had it been condemnatory, it is probable that either the last two acts would not have been written, or the play not produced during Louis' reign. But the king not only gave no sign of disfavour, but the great honour of having the Grand Monarque for a godfather was conferred on the dramatist's child. Molière's unhappy marriage with Armande Grésinde Béjart took place in 1666.

The post of court fool still existed when Molière wrote "La Princesse d'Élide," and whatever allusions the play may have contained to other matters, this remaining appendage of

royalty in the barbarous ages was delicately and skilfully ridiculed. It was made to appear an anomaly, in a court where strict etiquette and "*la grande politesse*" had taken the place of noisy mirth, coarse jesting, and rough manners. But the fool's occupation was not yet entirely gone. In many "great houses," for a fool to form part of the household was regarded as an evidence of ancient lineage; as the recently ennobled, and the wealthy *haute bourgeoisie*, did not encumber themselves with those miserable buffoons. The fool of Louis XIV. had belonged to the Grand Condé. The Count de Grammont said of him that, "of all the fools that had followed that prince, L'Angeli (the court fool) was the only one that had made his fortune by it."

The *fêtes* of 1667 lasted seven days. The king spent so recklessly on their preparation, that to provide funds for furnishing the necessary supplies for the war, which had been declared against Spain—ostensibly to enforce the rights renounced by Maria Theresa on her marriage, but, in reality, to afford the magnificent Louis an opportunity of presenting himself to the admiring eyes of Europe, as the centre of a grand military *spectacle*—greatly tried the finan-

cial ability of Colbert. Lulli's twenty-four, and twelve, violins were incessantly occupied in the *ballets mythologiques, allégoriques, féeriques*, etc., danced by the king, queen, Madame, Mademoiselle, and Monsieur, and their respective courts. Queen Henriette left her charming retreat at Ste. Madeleine de Chaillot to witness their performance, and was seated on a daïs with *grandes dames et seigneurs* grouped artistically around her. Bensérade wrote the verses which, between the dances, were recited by Molière's troupe. In one of these mythological *ballets* the king represented the sun Bensérade's address to that luminary was as follows :

"Je doute qu'on le prenne avec vous sur le ton
De Daphné ni de Phaéton ;
Lui trop ambitieux, elle trop inhumaine ;
Il n'est pas là de piége où vous puissiez donner,
Le moyen de s'imaginer
Qu'une femme vous fuie, et qu'un homme vous mene ?"

It was not only on festive occasions that Versailles wore an air of grand gala ; it was its habitual aspect. The gardens were already "fabulously grand." At Vaux nature had contributed, quite as much as art, to the marvellous beauty of the scene, that excited so much angry jealousy in the king. At Versailles she had

done nothing; and Louis' pleasure was the greater, for he imagined it to be the unrivalled creation of his own genius. Immense waste of treasure, reckless sacrifice of human life, the skill of engineers, and the artistic taste of Le Notre (all to be repeated, and in a few years exaggerated at Marly), had, indeed, transformed a barren sand-heath into a flourishing garden. Under the able direction of La Quintinie, groves, shrubberies, and shady avenues were, with much care and labour, transplanted from the woods of Compiègne and Fontainebleau; and though large numbers of them languished and died in the unfavourable soil of their new habitation, their places were immediately refilled from the same storehouses of nature. Versailles, with its palace, its gardens, its statues, and waterworks, Trianon, and appendages, was a work of art to gaze upon with wonder—"to admire and flee from."

Yet, on a bright spring day, or soft summer evening, when Louis, disposed for one of those long promenades he was accustomed to take, often twice in the day, descended to the gardens from the grand entrance of the palace, followed by his numerous court, the *coup d'œil*, from a distance, must have been charmingly

effective. The gardens were admirably adapted for such a display; it may have been a little theatrical—something like a "*grand tableau*" in a fairy extravaganza—yet very attractive. For a solitary ramble, or a stroll with two or three companions, those broad paths were repelling, and their formal grandeur depressing. No lover of the beauties of nature would have cared to wander through them. But when enlivened by sauntering, chatting, flirting, laughing groups of picturesquely and richly dressed ladies and gentlemen of the court—a numerous retinue of lackeys following, no less resplendent in dress than their masters—the admirable fitness of the gardens and grounds of Versailles for the purpose which Louis, no doubt, had in his mind when the designs were approved, must have been very striking.

In the centre of this throng of feathers and swords, satins and laces, flashing jewels, fans and masks, solemnly paced the magnificent Louis, with the air of lord of the universe; monarch of all he surveyed, and of all who surveyed him—for his courtiers lived only in the light of his countenance. What says La Bruyère, writing of the court? "Whoever considers how the happiness of the courtier lies

wholly in the face of the prince, that he makes it the one occupation of his life to look on it, and to be seen by it, may, in some degree, comprehend how in looking on the face of God consists all the glory and happiness of the saint." Yet the countenance of this god usually expressed nothing at all; it was as grandly cold, serene, and unchangeable as that of any of the marble deities that presided over his fountains.

It was no mean advantage to him that nature had kindly exalted him, at least three inches, above almost every other man of his court. The French were not generally a fine race of men; but the dress of the period—the high heels, the wig, stiffened and frizzed straight up above the forehead, the lofty plume and looped-up broad brimmed hat—gave to the *grandees* an appearance of height which, as a rule, they had not. Above them towered their king, like Jupiter in Olympus in the midst of the inferior gods, or as the sun, with the lesser lights revolving around him, and shining only in the refulgence of his rays. And something of their glimmer fell on most of them; for, as has been observed, it is remarkable what a likeness the courtiers generally bore to the king, and what a

strong resemblance the portraits of that period have to each other. It is probably owing to the form of the wig, which gave to all faces a similarity of contour.

Walking and talking, formed the whole of the business and amusement of life at Versailles, in the intervals of the more exciting occupations afforded by the *fêtes*. But "*toute la France*," as it was customary to say when speaking of the court (the people being counted for less than nothing) could not at one and the same time bask in the sunshine of the royal presence. There remained, however, in Paris, for the solace of those who rarely visited Versailles —either from choice or because their welcome there did not induce a more assiduous attendance—as also for others who, from various causes, were occasionally absent from that enchanted spot, the *salons* of the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu. La Rochefoucauld was then beginning to be a martyr to the gout, which, of course, excluded him from the royal promenades; but both he and Madame de La Fayette received at their hôtels, in the Rue de Seine, a distinguished circle of the *beau monde* and *gens de lettres*. There, too, we often meet with Madame de Sévigné and her daughter.

But except a little lively and sarcastic criticism on the news of the day, which, of course, meant court intrigues, love, and war, the amusement of their long evenings was the turning and re-turning, changing the form, and often the sense of two or three maxims. Sometimes they were proposed in the morning by Madame de Sablé, and received in the evening their final polish and keenness of edge from La Rochefoucauld. Madame de Sévigné has acknowledged that their point was occasionally so fine she failed to perceive it.

Mademoiselle, at the Luxembourg, affected literary tastes, also Madame, at the Palais Royal. The latter had received even less education than Mademoiselle, and she had not the same force of character; her reputation, too, was far from unblemished. But she was young, lively, and good-tempered, and an immense favourite with the king, who kept up a secret correspondence with her. This correspondence was conducted for them by the Marquis de Dangeau; they being wholly unaware that the same confidential secretary acted for both. It was a secret the marquis kept to himself, and profited by it; the publication of his memoirs revealed it.

Some few years later, *préciosité* would seem

to have glided into the *salons* of Versailles; for we are told by Mademoiselle de Scudéry of a discussion, occupying a whole evening there, on the difference between *la joie* and *l'enjouement.* Twice a week a numerous company assembled in the *petit salon*, the *réunion* being called "*l'appartement du roi.*" No strict etiquette was observed; for though the king was present, as he was not supposed to be holding a court, it was understood that he imposed no restraint on the sociability of his guests. He himself walked about among them, *sans cérémonie*—now, playing at billiards or piquet; now, conversing with his courtiers. Sometimes he strolled into the long gallery, which was bordered on both sides by rows of orange trees, placed in boxes of elaborately-chased silver. This gallery formed a sort of luminous avenue, being lighted by an immense number of wax candles, in lustres of rock crystal.

The queen sat with her ladies; the princesses danced with each other, or with the younger ladies in waiting; no cavalier being allowed to share in this pastime. The elders, dispersed about the *salons* in groups, either took their seats at the card-tables, of which there were several prepared for their use, or discoursed

amongst themselves on subjects that, without fear of evil results, might be proclaimed on the housetops; for all were aware that every fragment of conversation was carefully gathered up to be reported to the king, and often by listeners the least suspected.

The social freedom which by royal condescension was supposed to prevail at these receptions was, therefore, mere fiction. No one felt at his ease. They were grand and stately, but not social, *réunions*, and are described by Mademoiselle de Scudéry in her "Entretiens sur divers Sujets," in illustration of the subject she was writing upon—"La Magnificence." The volume was dedicated to Louis XIV.

CHAPTER XVII.

Madame Scarron.—Le Maréchal d'Albret.—La Maréchale.—Monsieur le Marquis.—Mdlle. de Grand Bois.—The Hôtel de Richelieu.—The Duke's Portrait Gallery.—An Amiable Wife.—Les Amants déclarés.—L'Abbé Testu.—The Pets of the Salons.—L'Abbé Scarron.—Madame de Montespan.—The Princess de Nemours.—Madame Scarron's Pension restored.

ADAME SCARRON'S pension of two thousand livres had ceased to be paid since the death of the queen-mother. From that time she had sent frequent petitions to the king, praying for its renewal, but had little reason to hope that her prayer would be granted. She was reduced almost to entire dependence on her friends and relatives, and the latter were by no means rich; her brother was indeed a worthless spendthrift, and the cause of much trouble and anxiety to his sister. A part of her time she passed in the country with the Duchess de Montchevreuil. In Paris, the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu

were by turns her abode. The proffered hospitality of Ninon she declined, so far as making her house her home; but she was a frequent visitor there, remaining for days together—the great intimacy and friendship existing between them being evident from Madame Scarron's letters.

Both the Maréchal d'Albret, and the Duc de Richelieu, had been friends of Scarron, and were constantly met with amongst the gay and distinguished, if rather boisterous, *jeunesse dorée*, who delighted in the society and licentious wit of the poor crippled poet. The maréchal was a wealthy and dissipated man of pleasure—a Gascon of the Béarnais family of Henri d'Albret. In 1651 he killed in a duel the Marquis de Sévigné, who had supplanted him in the good graces of a certain Madame Gondran. He was one of the many lovers of Madame Scarron; according to the assertion of those who represent her as vicious and artful, and destitute of moral principles. She was cold and calculating, no doubt; but as her aim was to acquire consideration, and a position in society, it is not likely that so clever a woman would compromise herself by accepting the attentions of such a man as the maréchal, otherwise, than as a

friend. And a friend he appears to have been; for he introduced her to his wife, a woman of high character, though considered, in those days of lax morality, severe and prudish. Madame d'Albret received the young widow with much kindness, and would have had her reside constantly with her; but Madame Scarron was desirous of remaining, as far as possible, free and independent. As she was a skilful embroideress, she was able to do so; the visits she paid to her wealthy friends enabling her to economize in the expenses of her humble *ménage.*

She endeavoured to please in order to secure friends, and generally she was considered amiable and agreeable, and a desirable acquisition to Madame d'Albret's social circle. Her dress, though of inexpensive material, was always well made, graceful, and becoming. Her modesty in this respect was of course much approved by the ladies. "She did not dress beyond her means or her station," which they accepted as a proof that she had no desire to rival or outshine them; they pardoned her, therefore, her fine figure and brilliant black eyes, which appear to have been her chief personal attractions. She, however, soon won the admiration

of a wealthy man of quality, who made her the offer of his hand and fortune. To the immense astonishment of her friends, she refused him. Even Madame d'Albret was amazed that she had no other reason to give for declining the honour of becoming Madame la Marquise, than that M. le Marquis was a man of notoriously dissipated life. Madame Scarron's letter on this subject to her friend Ninon, contrasting the *grand seigneur* with poor Scarron, of whom she speaks in the highest terms, is a most pleasing one. It leaves on the mind a very favourable impression both of the writer and the witty and satirical, but kindly-natured poet. One regrets, that it should afterwards have been shame and confusion to her to hear him named, though in the presence of the magnificent Louis.

Madame Scarron was also a welcome visitor at the Hôtel de Richelieu. Though somewhat reserved (*par politique*) it was evident, from her occasional remarks, that she was not wanting in *esprit*. She had been unusually well educated; had read extensively; and had much knowledge of the world. The vicissitudes of her life, from her earliest years, gave a tinge of romance to her history, and drew attention to her personally; which, at first, was

not without its influence, in opening the way to the attainment of that "consideration" she was ever striving after and seeking to extend.

The Duke and Duchess de Richelieu were rather an extraordinary couple. The duke was the heir of the great cardinal; dignity upon dignity had been heaped upon him; he had been regarded as one of the first *partis* in the kingdom, and several of those great families "*en velours rouge cramoisi*"—as Madame de Sévigné says—had sought his alliance. But the duke was steeped in vanity. He admired himself, as a handsome man, a man of fine intellect, a man of high character—*un preux chevalier*. A Mademoiselle de Grand Bois, a lady possessed of neither fortune nor beauty, and who was also many years the duke's senior, contrived to carry off this great matrimonial prize. She is said to have had more *savoir faire* than *esprit*, and to have so flattered the duke and praised his great qualities, that she convinced him she had as high an opinion of him as he had of himself. This endowed her, in his eyes, with merit far outweighing fortune and beauty. Her greatest difficulty lay in securing him when she had caught him; in keeping him in the mind to marry until he was actually

married; for he was accustomed to take violent likings and dislikings, passing from one emotion to the other with extraordinary suddenness. But Mademoiselle de Grand Bois, in spite of this fickleness of disposition, succeeded in becoming Duchesse de Richelieu.

Being of an easy, kindly temper, she bore with all her duke's caprices, continued to administer doses of flattery with an unsparing hand, and was very forbearing to his numerous weaknesses. Both, however, had a predilection for the society of *les gens de lettres et les gens d'esprit*, and twice, weekly, received at their hôtel a very brilliant and distinguished circle. There might be met the wittiest women in Parisian society—Madame de Cornuel, of whom even her confessor said, "Every sin she confessed was an epigram"; Madame de Coulanges, whose reputation for *esprit* was second only to Madame de Cornuel's; Madame de Sévigné, Mademoiselle de Scudéry, Madame de La Fayette, and the Countess de la Suze—who wrote elegies, greatly admired in those days—were all constant frequenters of the *salons* of the Duke and Duchess de Richelieu, together with a throng of other celebrities—poets, *littérateurs*, and *gens de la cour*.

In the *greniers*, or lofts, of the Hôtel de Richelieu, there were lying about, *pêle-mêle*, numberless dusty pictures—soiled, torn, and evidently little valued by their owner. They were the portraits of a long line, not of ancestors, but of forgotten friends—friends, once esteemed, honoured, loved; now, faded, blotted out altogether from the memory of the fickle duke, and their places filled up by new ones. It was his custom, when a friendship suddenly seized him for any one newly introduced at his hôtel, or whose merits, after long acquaintance, unexpectedly dawned upon him, to be very urgent in requesting to be favoured with the portrait of this estimable individual. Unfortunately, the benighted world knew not then of cartes-de-visite and album portraits, or the duke—as people do now—might have filled his portrait albums, instead of his *greniers*, with friendship's offerings and the notorieties of the day. Few, if any, declined to humour his whim, and generally they sat to the duke's portrait-painter—for he was a patron of the arts, and his friendships kept his *protégés* busily employed.

When the coveted treasure was brought to him—if the warmth of his friendship had ex-

perienced no abatement—the portrait was fixed at the head of his bed, or on the wall opposite to it. There it remained until it had to give place to a newer, if not more worthy or deserving, friend. These portraits were hung in a line round his room, and whenever a new one came in the others had to move on, that nearest the door going into the anteroom, where the same rule was followed—the portrait that had there reached the door being borne aloft to the *grenier;* the tomb of the Capulets, where lay the buried friendships of the duke.

According to the fashion of the day, the duke was addicted to gambling. His losses were enormous, and poor Madame de Richelieu trembled as she saw him rushing headlong to ruin. But on no account would she allow him to perceive her emotion. His self-complacency must not be ruffled. The shock to his feelings would be too severe, should he discover that she thought he could err, or that in any respect he fell short of perfection. So estate after estate was gambled away, while his duchess smiled sweetly upon him.

The ladies of the Hôtel de Richelieu imitated those of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, in having each her "*galant et honnête homme,*" but with this

difference, he was called "*son amant déclaré*," whether the lady was married or not. The perfect propriety of it was signified in the word *déclaré*, which meant that his attentions were publicly paid and received. There was no mystery, no attempt at concealment; therefore, though constantly attended by her "*amant déclaré*," her husband could make no objection to the arrangement and her reputation in no degree suffer. The Cardinal d'Etrées was the "*amant déclaré*" of Madame Scarron. "*Il plaisait son esprit sans toucher son cœur*," Madame de Caylus informs us; and she probably received the information from her aunt, as she herself at that time was not born.

Another ecclesiastic, l'Abbé Testu, was the "*amant déclaré*" of the duchess. He also affected to assume at the Hôtel de Richelieu the post filled by Voiture at Rambouillet. But he had neither the wit, the animal spirits, nor the epigrammatic talent that gained Voiture his reputation and the epithet of "*bel esprit*." The *abbé* was also a favoured dangler of Madame de Coulanges, and several other ladies, to whom he addressed his frivolous sentimentalities in rhymes. He was never so happy as when, without any competitor at hand for the

smiles of the *beau sexe*, he shone, alone in his glory, the centre of a circle of fair dames who all lavished their smiles upon him. But, as they were witty or simple—some laughed at him under the rose, maliciously encouraging him in his fond belief that he was the most brilliant of men; while others were really impressed by his marvellous powers of rapidly producing impromptu after impromptu, on diamond eyes and coral lips, jet black and golden hair.

But like Voiture, the *abbé* had studied his impromptus at home, for spontaneous utterance in society as opportunity could be made or found. There was, however, this difference between them; that of the sparkling wit that animated the brilliant *bagatelles* of the famous *bel esprit*, not a glimmer could be traced in the rhymed nothings which the fashionable *abbé* inflicted on his auditors. Perhaps the ladies were grateful for his attempts to be pointedly pretty when paying them compliments. They took the will for the deed, and, to reward him, prayed the king to bestow a bishopric upon him. But the sublime Louis gave no heed to their solicitations. On one occasion, to mark his deep displeasure at the frivolous flirting propensities of this butterfly *abbé*, he replied to

Madame d'Heudicourt, who was extolling his learning, his wit, and his many excellent qualities, "*que l'Abbé Testu n'était pas assez homme de bien pour conduire les autres.*" "*Il attend pour le devenir,*" answered madame, "*que votre majesté l'ait fait évêque.*" But l'Abbé Testu waited in vain for a bishopric, and, like the Abbé Cotin, whom in character he much resembled, remained an *abbé* to the end of his days.

But for Boileau, Molière, and Madame de Sévigné, these *abbés* would have been as little known to posterity as many others who fluttered as ladies' pets in the *salons* of the seventeenth century. *Très galants hommes* for the most part they were—polished in manners, very good-looking, hair and moustache always carefully arranged. The *soutane* conferred many privileges on the harmless, useful *abbé.* Often he amused a circle of ladies by reading a play or romance, while they were engaged with their embroidery or lace. He was usually clever at *bouts rimés* and *vers de société.* Many of the younger *abbés,* since music had come into fashion, could strum a guitar; if they did not themselves sing Quinault's tender ditties, they could accompany any lady that did. Then the dress—sober, and severely innocent of ribands and lace,

strongly contrasting with that of the gay cavaliers, yet not unbecoming. The presence of a distinguished-looking *abbé* seemed to sanctify any boudoir of which he had the privilege of the *entrée*, and to impart a *soupçon* of graceful piety to the occupations of the party of fair dames, who in the morning frequently assembled there.

Probably the wittiest of all *abbés* was the Abbé Scarron; and, had Richelieu lived, a *jeu-de-mots* might, as had happened more than once before, have procured him a bishopric. Scarron, however, from his infirmities, was the delight of no *salon* but his own. But he had the gallantry to throw off the clerical character, which sat so lightly upon him, for the sake of Françoise d'Aubigné. It is a question whether he would, even for her *beaux yeux*, have thrown up a bishopric and prayed to be secularized. It is well that he was not thus tempted; for there would have been no Madame Scarron, no Madame de Maintenon, and Louis no saint in his latter days, though inclined, by anticipation, to be a Latter-day saint.

The Marquis de Montespan was nearly related to the Maréchal d'Albret, and he and the marquise were constant frequenters both

of the Hôtel d'Albret and the Hôtel de Richelieu. Madame de Montespan was no less *spirituelle* than beautiful. She and her sisters were celebrated for a peculiarly piquant turn of thought, expressed with much grace and originality, called "*l'esprit des Mortemar*," because hereditary in their family. Her brother, the Maréchal de Vivonne, was famed for his *bons mots*. Her conversation was lively and agreeable, but generally a little sarcastic. Court scandal was a favourite topic with Madame de Montespan. The ill-concealed intrigues of Madame and the king; the jealousy of La Vallière; the timid anxiety with which the queen often glanced at her faithless spouse, when he seemed to be complacently admiring some newly-presented young beauty, all provoked her keenest ridicule. Of La Vallière she spoke with cutting contempt, and her position, of recognized mistress of the king, she professed to regard as degrading. Yet, already, 1668, she must have contemplated the possibility of succeeding to that distinguished post; for she entreated her husband to remove her to Guienne, to be out of the way of the pursuit of the king. But he, not regarding the danger as so imminent, and having a blind con-

fidence in her, failed to give much heed to the warning.

Her satirical portraits amused the social circle, and all laughed with her at the peculiarities and failings of their absent friends so wittily placed before them in a new, if distorting, light; though well aware that none were spared by her, and that they might, themselves, be the next objects of her *fine raillerie*. Madame Scarron, observant and reflective, may thus have become well acquainted with the true character of the woman who afterwards ruled the king and his court so imperiously; treated the queen with extreme *hauteur*, and the ministers as creatures appointed to obey her behests, but whom the clever and designing, and discreetly humble widow, made the stepping-stone to her own elevation.

An event, however, occurred about this time which seemed likely to remove Madame Scarron permanently from France. It was the marriage of the Princess Maria, daughter of the Duc de Nemours, with Affonso VI., King of Portugal. The Cardinal d'Etrées was the chief ecclesiastic commissioned to conduct the young lady to Lisbon. Ladies-in-waiting were appointed, though, it appeared, none particularly desired that honour

—for to leave the court of France for the Portuguese court, was looked upon as banishment from the world and its pleasures. A lady in quality of companionable attendant was, therefore, sought for, and Cardinal d'Etrées immediately bethought him of the widow Scarron, who was not wholly unknown to the princess. She approved of the cardinal's suggestion, and advantageous pecuniary offers being made to Madame Scarron, she accepted the engagement proposed to her. But fate willed that Madame de Montespan, who—though not yet quite openly, for her husband was for a time an obstacle to her advancement—had made considerable progress in the favour of the king, should present another petition for the renewal of the widow's pension, and also speak a good word, in support of it. At the solicitation of the marquise, the pension was granted, and her future rival immediately resigned her Portuguese appointment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Death of Henriette de France.—The Funeral Oration.—The Crime of Heresy.—Conquest of Flanders.—Fêtes at St. Germain.—Siege of Dôle.—Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.—The Phlegmatic Dutch Envoy.

ONE of the grandest of the grandly eloquent funeral orations of the great Bossuet, was that on the queen of Charles I., Henriette de France, who died in 1669. The misfortunes of the queen, the fate of her husband, the rebellious people, and the "usurper," formed a theme, which, worked up by the immense oratorical power of this "thunderer of the Church," produced a striking effect on his auditors. The heretical nation setting at defiance the right divine of kings, and slaying "the Lord's anointed;" "the scorner, sitting in his seat;" the altars of God defiled; the loving wife, flying with her children for safety to the home of her youth—a foreign land to them;

the pious resignation of the unfortunate queen; the death of the usurper; the repentance of the nation and recall of the exiled prince to the throne of his ancestors, were incidents that made up a perfect drama. And thrilling emotion they excited, as depicted by an orator who had the art of seizing all the resources of his subject, and who, varying his style with the varying sensations he sought to produce, was by turns grandly energetic, sublime, tender, pathetic.

The death of Queen Henriette caused little interruption to the dissipations of the court. She had rarely appeared there of late, having preferred, since the marriage of her daughter, to reside almost constantly at the convent of Ste. Madeleine de Chaillot, of which La Mère Angélique (Mademoiselle de La Fayette, to whom Louis XIII. was so romantically attached) was the abbess. A great friendship had existed between them from girlhood. Few people now remembered Louis XIII., and those few had no respect for his memory; the strong affection these two women still bore him was therefore another bond of sympathy between them. The convent, too, was a pleasant retreat, beautiful in its situation, with

charming grounds and gardens, of great extent. And, there, Henriette, who cared naught for the world or its pleasures, after Charles had perished on the scaffold, peacefully spent the last years of her life; disturbed, perhaps, now and then by the whispers that reached her of the dissipations and intrigues of her daughter, and the dissolute life and surroundings of her son, Charles II. She was fast fading from the memory of the Parisian *beau monde* when her death was announced. M. de Condom—as Bossuet was then called—revived a temporary interest in her chequered career. He had surpassed himself in this funeral oration; he had dwelt forcibly on the crime of heresy, and so long as there remained in the memory of his auditors any lingering echo of his eloquent words, they would exclaim: "*Ah! quelle était malheureuse cette pauvre reine! Dieu! quel sort! d'épouser un roi Huguenot; de vivre parmi ces hérétiques insulaires; une nation abandonnée de Dieu. Mais la sainte Vierge a beaucoup priée pour elle, et elle a eu du temps pour s'occuper de son salut. Dieu soit loué!*"

Now the scene changes. The talk is of war, and the rumour is rife that the king will make the campaign.

The king had already added to the glory that covered him, that of the fame of a warrior. In 1667, he had looked on, at a safe distance, while Maréchals Turenne and Luxembourg took possession of Flanders. And this conquest was made not by force of arms, but by treaty with the Emperor Leopold I. (who had been assisted by a few French troops in warding off the attacks of the warlike and formidable Turks, under Mahomet IV.), that no opposition should be offered to France in the appropriation of that province; which belonged to Spain, whose monarch, then a child, was the feeble-minded Charles II. The towns were all open places, with garrisons of a few hundred Spaniards, and the victorious generals had but to walk into them to make them their own. The difficulty was to retain possession of them. Louvois advised the adoption of Vauban's new system of military fortification; of which Lille was the first example, and Vauban the first governor of the citadel.

Louis, after this military promenade, returned to his capital, to give brilliant *fêtes* in his own honour, and to receive the due reward of his great achievements—the acclamations of his loyal subjects; the unbounded applause of

his courtiers; and the enthusiastic admiration of his mistresses. St. Germain—which still divided with Versailles the honour of giving *fêtes* on a grand scale—was the scene of endless festivities, when, in the following year, to the astonishment of the court, the king again set out for the wars, accompanied by the young Duc d'Enghien, son of the Grand Condé. Secretly, preparations had been made for taking possession of La Franche Comté. Jealous of the reputation of Turenne, and of his increased favour with the king—since he had abjured the errors of Protestantism to embrace those of Catholicism—Condé desired to share in the dangers and glory of their expedition, which was, indeed, but another "*veni, vidi, vici*" affair. Secret intrigues with the governors of towns, substantial bribes, and twenty thousand men in the background, more than sufficed for the conquest of the province.

At the approach of Condé and Luxembourg, Besançon and Salins surrender. The news is brought to Louis, and instantly he leaves St. Germain to share in the glory of these hard-earned victories. Dôle, actually resists! The governor has a garrison of four hundred men, and conceives it to be his duty to make a stand,

even against the conquering hosts of the Great Condé. The king, too, considers this an appropriate occasion for displaying his valour. He will besiege Dôle in person. His tents, accordingly, are pitched some two or three miles away; and there, surrounded by all the ceremonial of St. Germain, in miniature, he awaits the reports of Condé, and learns from him in person, from hour to hour, how this perilous attack is proceeding. "*On ne lui voyait point,*" says Voltaire with amusing irony, "*dans les travaux de la guerre, ce courage emporté de François I. et de Henri IV. qui cherchaient toutes les espèces de dangers. Il se contentait de ne les pas craindre et d'engager tout le monde à s'y précipiter pour lui avec ardeur.*" And this proved his superior wisdom. Like those great monarchs, he sought "the bubble reputation," and obtained it; but he kept carefully out of the way of the perils of the cannon's mouth. Consequently, when Dôle was taken—and it could not of course hold out long—Louis, with great parade as a conquering hero, entered the town, and, within twelve days from his departure from St. Germain, with the connivance of the emperor, the young king of Spain was robbed of another province.

Other nations now thought it time to begin to assemble troops, and the emperor, repenting of his treaty with Louis, secretly encouraged Holland to enter into alliance with Sweden and England, in order to check this sort of warfare on the part of France, and to preserve the balance of power in Europe. That such a little upstart state, as Holland, should have the audacity to think of limiting his conquests, excited, not unnaturally, the wrath of the great soldier. But Spain had turned to her and sought her interference; and this wounded his pride still more. He was overwhelmed with indignation, and, in his heart, vowed to be avenged, but perceived that it would be well to defer the chastisement of the little state until prepared to inflict it with *éclat*. To save himself, therefore, from the further indignity of being forced into a peace by Holland and her allies, he hastened to propose it himself to Spain. Aix-la-Chapelle was the place chosen for the plenipotentiaries to assemble in conference; but the terms of the peace were actually settled at St. Germain, between Van-Beuning, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, and the minister Lyonne. The Dutch envoy treated with equal indifference, the splendours of the French court;

the haughty airs and tone of superiority assumed by the ministers appointed to confer with him; and the imperious manners of the Grand Monarque, who—though unwilling to surrender any part of his conquests—was compelled to restore La Franche Comté.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Royal Progress.—Mdlle. de Montpensier.—The Count de Lauzun.—The King's Historiographer.—A Numerous Retinue.—The Three Queens.—Preparing to Invade Holland.—A Windfall for Charles.—La Belle Bretonne.—La Vallière's Star Setting.—Monsieur again Jealous.—Death of Madame.—Its Cause doubtful.

E GRAND MONARQUE has set out, ostensibly, on a royal progress through La Flandre Française—the name then given to that portion of Flanders he had lately taken possession of. Never had either Flanders, or France, itself, witnessed a pageant so splendid. The real object, however, of this imposing display is to conduct Madame to Calais, where, being so near the land of her birth, she will, naturally, wish to see it, and to avail herself of so favourable an opportunity of paying her brother a visit. But, for reasons of state, this visit, already arranged, is a secret

known only to Madame and the king, Turenne and Louvois.

The royal party is a numerous one. The carriages prepared for them are surpassingly sumptuous—large, commodious, and slung on springs; luxuriously cushioned, and fitted up with rich velvet and an abundance of gold embroideries and fringes. They have glass windows — an improvement now generally adopted in the carriages of the rich—and they may be raised or lowered at pleasure. The paintings on the panels are masterpieces, usually mythological subjects, in which, under the aspect of a god, you may trace the features of Louis XIV. The liveries of the crowd of lackeys, the harness and trappings of the horses, are of corresponding magnificence.

Besides Madame, the queen is of the party, also, Madame de Montespan—now *surintendante de la maison de la reine*—Madame de La Vallière, Mademoiselle de Keroual, several princesses, and the ladies of the royal household most distinguished for beauty. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, with her numerous pages and ladies-in-waiting, and carriages of her own, rivalling the king's, has joined the *cortége*. But less for the sake of increasing its brilliancy and

partaking of the festivities—which began when the pageant left St. Germain, and are to continue throughout its *route*—than to be near Lauzun, colonel of the Royal Regiment of Guards, and now high in favour with the king. The splendour of his uniform, and his eccentric airs and graces, as he rides at the head of his regiment, seeking to attract the attention of his royal master, please Mademoiselle; who desires to dazzle the gallant colonel by this display of her wealth, and to charm him by smiles and gracious manners, preparatory to making him an offer of marriage. She would greatly resent his presumption, should *he* dare to speak of marriage to *her*. Poor Mademoiselle! she, who in the bloom of her beauty rejected princes and kings, and scornfully laughed at Mazarin's offer of the crown of France, which she had been supposed to be so anxious to wear, is much to be pitied for falling in love—and for the very first time—with this "Cadet de Lauzun," when so far advanced on the road of life as half-way between forty and fifty. The little dauphin, nine years of age, is there with his court—the Duc and Duchess de Montausier, governor and governess; Bossuet, just appointed preceptor, and a train of attendants.

M. Pélisson is the historiographer appointed by the king to accompany this royal pageant. The same who so learnedly and eloquently defended the unfortunate Marquis de Belle Isle, but who is now basking in the sunshine of royal favour, and lauding the great Louis with fervour unsurpassed by the most abject of courtiers. During his four years and a half of solitude in the Bastille, he seriously reflected on the errors of his ways. No sooner was he liberated than he abjured Protestantism; and shortly after he received his reward. Louis remembered the eloquence of his appeals—much of which was due to Mademoiselle de Scudéry—and employed him to write the history of the brilliant conquest of Franche Comté. Pélisson sounded the trumpet of fame so grandly that even the hero of that great military achievement was content. Thenceforth, Pélisson prospered; he became an *abbé*, and was zealous almost overmuch, for his new faith, at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

All the cooks and the scullions with the royal *batteries de cuisine*, and the *maîtres-d'hôtel*, with the silver, the china, the glass, and provisions of all kinds, together with workmen innumerable, to fit up the banqueting and ball-rooms,

precede the king and the royal *cortége.* Their business is to prepare at the appointed places for his Majesty's arrival. With them are also waggons, laden with beds and splendid furniture from the royal palaces—a party of pioneers going before to clear, or make the roads for this mighty procession. Fifteen thousand soldiers march before the court, for the reinforcement of the garrisons; the king's staff officers ride near his carriage, the "Cent Gardes," Suisses, also accompany him, and fifteen thousand soldiers follow—a menace to the people, should any signs of dissatisfaction be evinced at this triumphal march through their country. For, although peace is signed, the French are looked upon in Flanders as even less desirable masters than the more distant Spaniards. Many of that nation also form part of the population, and the taunting message sent by the Spanish Government to its generals and *employés,* in Flanders and La Franche Comté, that "if the king of France had but employed his lackeys to take possession of these provinces, he might have saved himself the trouble of going in person, and with an army, to do so," has wounded their pride exceedingly. A display of fireworks announces to the mayors, or chief

magistrates of the various towns visited, the approach of the court, and the special honour about to be inflicted upon them.

With this pompous retinue—like a cloud of locusts, devouring all that lay before it—French Flanders was traversed. The Flemish ladies were especially anxious to see "the three queens;" and all who could find or make any pretext for visiting them met with a very gracious reception. For the king, courting popularity, distributed with a liberal hand to the ladies many *souvenirs* of this royal progress —such as pearls and diamonds, bracelets, earrings, massive gold chains, and other trinkets; as well as fifteen hundred louis d'or, daily, in "*gratifications*" to the officers, and troops in garrison. He was very desirous of propitiating all classes in Flanders, because of his designs on their neighbours, the Dutch.

Immediately after the signing of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the king, and his minister Louvois, began quietly, but diligently, to prepare for the annihilation of the flourishing little state which had presumed to step forward as a check to his ambition. Thirty vessels of war were building, each to carry fifty guns. A larger army than France had ever before pos-

sessed was being raised, and splendidly equipped, and the infantry disciplined and drilled by the famous General Martinet; who was arming several regiments with the bayonet—which from that time entirely superseded the pike, and was then considered the most terrible weapon that military art had invented. The cavalry, under another tactician, the Vicomte de Fourilles, were being exercised in new evolutions, and subjected to more systematic rules and regulations, as regarded discipline. Stores were being collected, and more efficient methods of transport devised. Unsuspecting Holland, looking on these preparations as merely a menace to Spain, furnished a considerable part of the ammunition destined to be employed against herself, thus, aiding the designs of her enemy; her supplies of military stores, generally, being still unreplaced when she found she needed them most.

But when all that ambition, human foresight, and a desire for revenge, could suggest, had been done to ensure success in this enterprize, it was felt by both the minister and the king, that, unless England could be detached from her alliance with Holland, these vast preparations might possibly prove very little disastrous to

the Dutch, or even to have been made wholly in vain. Charles cared neither for France nor Holland, and regarded not the honour of his country. A life of dissolute gaiety, and plenty of money, to squander on his own *menus plaisirs* and those of his favourites and ladies-in-waiting, comprised all he desired. Dunquerque, acquired by Cromwell, he had already sold to France for five millions of francs. And a very acceptable windfall it was to him; as he could not obtain money with the same facility as his more despotic cousin of France. It was likely, therefore, that it would be convenient to him to receive another good round sum; and that he would have no very strong scruples of conscience to overcome, should the conditions involved in its acceptance include even an act of baseness.

To attain his ends, the bright thought occurred to Louis of sending a lady to Charles, as plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary—the intriguing and unscrupulous Madame; who, whether in person she resembled her brother or not, was exceedingly like him in disposition and character. A sister, however, is not always the most influential pleader to send to a brother. Mademoiselle de Keroual, *une belle Bretonne*,

was therefore attached to the mission. Finding the English fleet anchored off Dunquerque, the lady diplomatists embarked at that port, accompanied by a part of the French court. After a good tossing in the Channel, they landed at Dover, where they remained for a day or two to repose. Charles, being informed of their arrival, hastened to meet them at Canterbury. And there his accustomed deference to the wishes of ladies, his great friendship for his cousin of France, also some regard to the empty condition of the royal private purse, but, above all, his utter want of the slightest sense of honour, induced him to accept the handsome consideration offered him, and to consent to pick a quarrel with the Dutchmen—to leave them, in fact, so far as he was concerned, to be dealt with according to the tender mercies of the Grand Monarque.

Mdlle. de Keroual was so well pleased either with England or its merry monarch, or perhaps with both, that she did not return to France; and Charles was so well pleased with *la belle Bretonne*, that he created her Duchess of Portsmouth. Madame, however, having accomplished the honourable object of her mission, came back triumphant. Though she had lost her

"*attachée,*" she had the treaty of Canterbury in her pocket, duly signed and sealed.

During her absence, the king's progress being ended, he had given a series of entertainments; balls, *ballets,* and plays. He and the queen, with Mademoiselle, Mesdames de Montespan and La Vallière, and the ladies and gentlemen of the court, had danced and performed in them, to the delight and wonder of the Flemish *beaux* and *belles.* The great homage paid by the king to Madame de Montespan, opened the eyes of the court, of the "*maîtresse en titre,*" and of the poor little queen, to the waning favour of La Vallière and the approaching triumph of her successor. All were, of course, ready to worship the rising star, at the first signal from the king that such was his royal will and pleasure. But that signal was not yet given — the haughty airs of Montespan; the timid, silent trouble of the queen; the reproaches and tears of La Vallière, being, under the circumstances. exhibited *très mal-à-propos.* For the king and his three queens were the observed of all observers, and living, from necessity during this progress, very much in public, their words, their looks, their actions, were closely scrutinized, and became the subject of very free, and often very

merry, comment. The king, aware of this, was annoyed—it was a crime in his eyes. Though it is not possible to imagine that it ever entered his thoughts that he himself could appear ridiculous; yet he may have possessed just so much of a Frenchman's sensitiveness as to perceive that his three queens did, and to be irritated by it. Positive blindness, was the rule at court, both to his and his mistresses' immoralities; the arrival of Madame, therefore, could not have occurred more opportunely, both on account of the satisfaction he received, from the success of her and the fair Bretonne's diplomacy, and the pretext it afforded for immediately returning to St. Germain.

The *ménage* of Madame and Monsieur was rather a disorderly one. If the conduct of Monsieur was bad, that of Madame was little better. "*Elle manquait à Monsieur en beaucoup de choses, et l'aigreur était grande de toutes parts,*" are the words of Madame de La Fayette, her intimate friend and chosen biographer. Monsieur disapproved of this visit to England, whose object was not communicated to him, as well as of the secret but great intimacy that continued to exist between Madame and the king. Some suspicions of poisoning at-

tached to him, when, not long after her return, her death took place rather suddenly, at St. Cloud. They, however, seem to have been wholly unfounded; and St. Simon's statement that the poison was sent from Rome, by the Chevalier de Lorraine, a discarded and banished favourite of Monsieur, is unworthy of credit. St. Simon gives the story without much variation, very likely, from the words in which it was repeated to him, thirty years or more after the event (for it occurred five years before he was born), by a friend who had heard it from a man supposed to have been implicated in the motiveless crime. The man was pardoned, he says, by Louis XIV. on confessing to him, in secret, that Madame was poisoned, and giving him his assurance that Monsieur was not concerned in the vile deed, and had no knowledge of it.

The poison is said to have been diamond-dust, put into a glass of chicory-water—which Madame was accustomed to take daily—a poison that would have no other effect than, when, as at a royal banquet in ancient days, there was thrown

> "A pearl of great price in a goblet of gold,
> *More costly to render the draught.*"

Her death, more probably, was owing to the effects of a dissipated life on a weakly constitution; or she may have been bled to death; as the Princess of Conti was beaten and battered to death, to rouse her from a lethargy, or supposed apoplexy. The doctor was too generally brought in, in those days, but to give the patient the *coup de grace*. Of medical or surgical skill there was none, and less progress was made in the healing art than in any other.

CHAPTER XX.

Funeral Oration of Madame.—Madame's Last Hours.—Great Pulpit-Orators.—Preachers at the Play.—The Pulpit and the Stage.—Fénélon.—Télémaque.—Peterborough at Cambrai.—Cambrai during the Wars.—St. Simon's Portrait of Fénélon.

ADAME was but in her twenty-seventh year when she died. Her funeral oration, pronounced by Bossuet, was one of that great preacher's finest displays of oratory. The impression it made on his hearers was almost unparalleled. "*Cette oraison funèbre,*" says Voltaire, "*eut le plus grand et le plus rare des succès, celui de faire verser des larmes à la cour.*" The orator, himself, was deeply affected. Madame had been much moved by Bossuet's oration on the death of her mother in the preceding year, and had expressed her intention, shortly after that event, to begin to "*faire son salut.*" Bossuet had,

therefore, been requested to come to her, when she was at leisure, and talk with her on the subject.

After a round of dissipation it was customary to leave off jewellery and rouge and to spend a few days, *en retraite*, in some fashionable convent—usually the Carmelites. Confession and absolution followed; and the fine ladies of that period were ready, with a clear conscience, to return to the world to go through the same process again. And it is probable that Madame had not neglected to perform those outward acts of piety. Few ladies neglected them, since Anne of Austria had introduced the fashion of uniting "*la dévotion avec la belle galanterie*," and Louis XIV. had continued it.

But Bossuet was with Madame in her last hours; striving to soothe the agony of her deathbed, and to allay her mental distress with words of comfort and hope. He had seen this princess, whose gaiety and wit, but two days before, charmed and enlivened a dissolute court, expire in the prime of life—her last breath expended in one long, piercing, cry of anguish. It can well be believed that the faltering voice of the great preacher, as he uttered the opening words of his discourse, followed by momentary inability to continue—the silence broken only

by the sobs of his auditors—proceeded, not from mere oratorical art seeking to produce effect, but, from real emotion. Who does not know those opening words:

"*O nuit désastreuse! O nuit effroyable! où retentit tout à coup, comme un éclat de tonnerre cette accablante nouvelle: Madame se meurt!—Madame est morte!*" Throughout, this oration is sublimely pathetic, yet so natural, so simple. If there is art in it, it is the perfection of art, for it is nowhere apparent; but the voice and action of the orator, would naturally impart to it a still greater and far more impressive interest.

On the stage, and in the pulpit, no country has excelled France, and it is doubtful whether the latter has ever been filled by more powerful orators than the great preachers of the time of Louis XIV. Amongst them must be included the rival of Bossuet and Bourdaloue, Jean Claude, the eloquent Protestant minister of Charenton; with whom Bossuet so long contended, in the famous Conference on the subject of the authority on which certain doctrines of their respective faiths were founded. It was probably to Claude that Madame de Sévigné alluded in her letter of February 5th, 1674:

"*Le père Bourdaloue*," she says, "*fit un sermon le jour de Notre Dame, qui transporta tout le monde. Il était d'une force à faire trembler les courtisans, et jamais prédicateur évangélique n'a prêché plus hautement ni généreusement les vérités chrétiennes.*" Yet, with the exception of Claude, who, not being of the court, was not exposed to the same temptation, rarely did even these magnates of the Church fail to fall in with the prevailing disposition to flatter the vanity of the king. They launched out boldly and denounced the vices of the day; they spoke of death and judgment to come, in tones and words that thrilled through every heart; yet, when their eyes turned towards the king, these great masters of oratorical art, by gesture, by change of expression, by momentary but sudden silence, or other effective action, seemed to indicate that there was present one great being, lifted above the rest of poor humanity, to whom none of those things applied.

They were, indeed, preachers by profession, distinct from the priesthood; they had their *loge grillée* at the theatre, where, hidden from vulgar gaze, they studied the attitudes, the gestures, and the varying expression of countenance, of the principal actors, both male and female.

Molière, who was an excellent comedian—as all actors were then called—and played the chief part in his own plays; the inimitable Baron, who succeeded him; Champmeslé, with whom Racine was in love, and for the display of whose great tragic powers his first plays were chiefly written; Desœillets, and other celebrities of the stage—all served as models to the celebrities of the pulpit. For the pulpit was as the stage, "a thing of fashion, a piece of display." But the preacher denounced the player, from whom so much of his effective action was borrowed, and while often using it to give force to his words, when pointing out to others the road to heaven, forbade the poor players even to hope that St. Peter would open its gates to them. Condemned to the lower regions, these outcasts from heaven must not, in death, mingle their dust with that of the flock of the faithful. Molière, who died while playing in the "Malade imaginaire," in February, 1673, was, as is well known, refused Christian burial. His wife petitioned in vain the Archbishop of Paris, the infamous *débauché*, Harlai, and only at the instance of Louis XIV. did he allow of the interment, secretly, in the cemetery of the chapel of St. Joseph, in the Faubourg de

Montmartre. Two priests attended, but the usual prayers were not intoned, and no burial service was read. Yet Molière deserved not only Christian burial, but a funeral oration; and far more than many to whom that vain honour was accorded. If he was too subservient to the king, so were those great orators of the church, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, and the rest.

Perhaps Fénélon, who appeared somewhat later in the century, was less of a courtier than others, though apparently by nature adapted for one. At all events, he did not find favour with the Grand Monarque, who called him, "*l'homme le plus chimérique de son royaume;*" and he excited the envy of Bossuet, who, in his character of "*le père de l'Eglise,*" caballed against him. Fénélon was ordered to repair to his diocese; his book, "Les Maximes des Saints," was denounced; and he was accused of fatal heresy in asserting, with the Quietists, that "God should be loved for Himself." But his unpardonable crime in the eyes of the king was the work that obtained for him his world-wide renown—"Télémaque." Louis saw in it a censure on himself and his government. In the love of flattery, in the extravagance, the undertaking of useless wars, the disregard of

the lives of his subjects, and the ruin of the state by oppressive taxation, attributed to Idoménée, he recognized his own portrait. Mentor, addressing Idoménée, says: "*Une vaine ambition vous a poussé jusqu'au bord du précipice; à force de vouloir paraître grand, vous avez pensé ruiner votre véritable grandeur.*" And Louis, when he read this work, from a manuscript copy, found himself exactly in the position described. He was mortified beyond measure; but less at the truthfulness he discovered in it than at the audacity of the author in telling the truth. In reference to the denizens of the infernal regions, the observation occurs: "*On remarquait que les plus méchants d'entre les rois, étaient ceux à qui on avait donné les plus magnifiques louanges pendant leur vie.*" This, also, Louis appropriated, as a hint of what was reserved for him hereafter. Much more to the same effect, and equally irritating, he found in the work; for he read the whole of it—interested, probably, in spite of his displeasure.

As the king had no magnanimity in his character, he was unable to pardon censure, under any form, on himself or his government. He forbade the publication of "Télémaque;"

which was not written, as is sometimes asserted, for the use of Fénélon's pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, but was composed in his leisure hours, after his retirement to his diocese. His *valet de chambre* is said secretly to have copied it and sent it to Amsterdam for publication—thus, spreading throughout Europe the name and fame of the archbishop, notwithstanding the displeasure of the king. How Louis' manuscript copy was obtained, does not very clearly appear.

Fénélon was one of the most amiable of men. There was a spice of romance in his character, which, with his pleasing personal appearance and distinguished manners, was very attractive. Banished from the court, he never returned to it, but passed the rest of his life at Cambrai. He was greatly beloved; no person of distinction, passed through, or within a considerable distance of, the place of his residence without visiting the archbishop, to whose hospitable abode all were kindly and courteously welcomed. The eccentric Lord Peterborough was his guest for a fortnight or more. While at Cambrai, he wrote to a friend in England, that, if he stayed another week with Fénélon, his example would make a Christian of him, in

spite of himself. During the wars, when fighting occurred in or near his diocese, he received into his spacious archiepiscopal residence the sick and wounded, irrespective of nation, rank, or creed, and had them carefully attended to and provided for. When the royal troops were suffering from scarcity of provisions, he opened his granaries and supplied them gratuitously. Even the king felt compelled to praise him; and Marlborough, who commanded the English armies, so highly esteemed this good and great archbishop, from whom his disabled soldiers had received so much kindness, that he ordered his domain to be spared from the ravages of the troops. The Duke of Burgundy was strongly attached to him. Had he succeeded to the throne, and the archbishop lived, he would, no doubt, as was generally expected and desired, have recalled him from Cambrai to take part in the government. But Louis outlived them both. Fénélon died a few months before the king, in his sixty-fourth year, from the effects of an accident while on a journey. "*Sa physionomie,*" says St. Simon, "*rassemblait tout, et les contraires ne s'y combattaient point. Elle avait de la gravité et de la galanterie, du sérieux et de*

la gaieté; elle sentait également le docteur, l'évêque et le grand seigneur. Ses manières y répondaient. Avec cela, un homme qui se mettait à la portée de chacun, sans le faire jamais sentir; qui les mettait à l'aise et qui semblait enchanter; de façon qu'on ne pouvait le quitter, ni s'en défendre ni ne pas chercher à le retrouver. A tout prendre, c'était un bel esprit et un grand homme."

One of the most interesting, and most truthful, of St. Simon's portraits of celebrated persons of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV.. is that of this highly estimable Archbishop of Cambrai.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mademoiselle's Secret.—A Respectful Lover.—The Name on the Window-Pane.—Louis consents to the Marriage.—"Delays are Dangerous."—The King's Honour at Stake.—Disappointed Hopes.—Grief and Wild Despair.—The Marquis de Montespan.—La Vallière's First Flight.—The Mardi-Gras Ball.—The Rival Mistresses.—"L'Amphitryon."

HE haughty and imperious Grande Mademoiselle has confided to the favoured Count de Lauzun that her affections are given to "*un gentilhomme de la cour.*" It is, however, a secret, undivulged, love, and she would have him guess the name of the fortunate individual whose exceptional merits have awakened those tender emotions that so long have lain dormant in her heart. Lauzun is, of course, greatly flattered by this mark of Mademoiselle's confidence in him; but, alas! he can name no one worthy of the priceless gift. Timidly, as he speaks, he raises his downcast eyes to her, as if beseeching her to

spare him the pain of this cruel *badinage*. For this is not the first time, since the return from Flanders, that Mademoiselle has endeavoured to draw from the gallant count a confession, not exactly amounting to a declaration of love—she would almost resent that as presumptuous—but indicating that he could a tender tale unfold, were he not awed by the height of the pinnacle of greatness that elevates her so far above him.

But Lauzun is too wary to be drawn into such a confession. He has long and assiduously paid his court to her, with the view of insinuating himself into her affections; but knowing her character, he has never approached her but with an air and tone of profound and severe respect, that seemed to exclude all idea of gallantry, or hope of pleasing as a lover. And he chose to appear perfectly unconscious of the fact that he did please. When Mademoiselle wished to make him understand that his attentions were agreeable to her, he gently complained that her irony distressed him. This pure and respectful attachment greatly exalted him in her opinion. She desired to reward it, and imagined—for Mademoiselle was a novice in such matters—how great would be his delight, his surprise, his joy, his gratitude, when the

truth dawned upon him, that the love he dared not tell, was not only divined but reciprocated. Yet she hesitated; for in affairs of the heart, even a queen or a grande mademoiselle would wish to lay aside dignity, and, as an ordinary woman, be asked for her love, though by one a step or two below royalty, rather than timidly offer it.

This womanly feeling made the name of Lauzun difficult to utter; twice it died on her lips; and again she asked him to guess. But Lauzun still affected to torture his brains in vain. Mademoiselle, determined at last by one decisive effort to tear the veil from his eyes, rose, and on a window-pane, which was conveniently covered with dust, slowly traced with her finger the name of the man she loved. Lauzun gazed upon it with ecstasy; yet as one who believed that he dreamed. After sufficient time had been given to dumb raptures—for he would not trust his tongue to tell them—he rushed towards the enraptured Mademoiselle and, still speechless with emotion, threw himself at her feet. She raised him, and he was permitted—happy man!—to touch the tips of her fair fingers with his lips.

Without the king's consent, there could be

no publicly-acknowledged marriage. But Louis was so deeply moved by the pathetic eloquence with which love inspired his fair cousin, when on her knees she poured forth the story of her heart's struggles, her hopes, her longings, her supplications to be permitted to raise to her own rank the man to whom her affections were wholly devoted, that he unhesitatingly gave his consent. Lauzun was to become Duc de Montpensier, and to be endowed with all Mademoiselle's worldly goods, which comprised one of the largest fortunes in the kingdom—four duchies, the principality of Dombes, the Comté d'Eu, the palace of the Luxembourg, several by no means despicable etceteras, and twenty millions of *livres de rentes*. She would reserve nothing for herself, in order to show her full confidence in him.

On Monday, the 15th of December, 1670,* the marriage was publicly announced to take place at the Louvre on the following Sunday. The event was also made known to foreign courts. An earlier day had been named; but Lauzun was not disposed to have the cere-

* See Madame de Sévigné's letter of that date to M. de Coulanges, announcing, "*la chose la plus étonnante, la plus merveilleuse, la plus miraculeuse, la plus étourdissante*," etc., etc., etc.

mony privately and quietly performed. He would enjoy his triumph; M. le Duc de Montpensier must have a suitable retinue; new carriages; new liveries; and be married, as he suggested, when the king attended mass in the royal chapel of the Tuileries. Tuesday, as Madame de Sévigné informs us, "*se passa à parler, à s'étonner, à complimenter.*" On Wednesday, Mademoiselle made a gift to her *fiancé*, of the estates that conferred on him the names and the titles he was described by in the marriage contract; which awaited only the king's signature. For that day M. de Lauzun was at the head of the French peerage, in virtue of his possession of the Comté d'Eu, and his vanity gratified, for the same space of time, by being addressed as M. le Duc de Montpensier. On Thursday morning it was determined, that the marriage should be solemnized in the country. Delays are proverbially dangerous, and in this instance proved fatal to the hopes of both love and ambition. To delay their realization, was "to tempt God and the king," as a friend observed to Mademoiselle. But she had the king's consent, at least; and upon that she relied.

On the evening of Thursday, Mademoiselle

and Lauzun were desired to attend the king at the Tuileries. This is almost the only occasion on which we hear of the poor little timid queen's interference in any affair, either domestic or public. She was now, however, put forward and supported by the Duc d'Orleans, le Grand Condé, several of the principal nobility, and the ministers—Louvois especially—to represent to his Majesty, how derogatory was such a marriage to a princess of the royal house of France! How offensive to the princes of the blood, that this Gascon adventurer should be allowed to assume the proud name of Montpensier, and be placed on a level with them! How mortifying to the ancient nobility, that this younger son of the obscure family of Puyguilhem (his family name) should take the *pas* of them by being raised to the first peerage in the kingdom! "The king's honour and reputation would be lowered in the sight of the world if he permitted this marriage to take place." The king shuddered, at the bare idea of the possibility of such a calamity. There was no need to urge further—he was convinced. And when Mademoiselle and Lauzun appeared, instead of the signing of the contract—to witness which they supposed they were summoned—they were in-

formed that the king withdrew his consent, and absolutely forbade them to think of the marriage.

It must have been a trying moment for both of them. Lauzun believed that he had firmly placed his foot on the lofty height to which his ambition had pointed. But, suddenly thrust to earth again, he struggled manfully with the feelings of deep disappointment he naturally experienced when so unexpected a blow was dealt to him. He received the king's order with firmness, but with every appearance of respect and submission. Not so, la Grande Mademoiselle. She wept, she raved, and complained bitterly; and overwhelmed her royal cousin with reproaches. On returning to the Luxembourg, she immediately went to bed, wept floods of tears, and "would take nothing for two days but broth." But on the following day she received visits, after the fashion of disconsolate widows—lying in state in her bed. Her *ruelle* was filled with guests, curious to see how she bore her grief, if they felt but little compassion for her. And she appears to have calmed down scarcely at all; exhibiting, in the violent demonstration of her feelings, a vehemence resembling that of her grandmother, Marie de Médicis, and

the same facility of weeping in torrents. In the wildness of despair, she rose up in her bed, and pointing to a vacant couch in the room, she exclaimed, "*Il serait là ! il serait là !*" Her sympathizing visitors could scarcely refrain from laughter. And he would have been there, had all gone on smoothly, receiving, as was customary, the felicitations of his friends. The foreign ambassadors had now to report to their respective courts, the breaking off of the marriage, and Louis, who had been generally blamed for giving his consent, was still more blamed for withdrawing it.

Having exhausted her tears and reproaches, Mademoiselle reappeared at court. And she bore herself somewhat haughtily; but as that was not unusual with her, there was little perceptible difference in her manner. Already—so it has been asserted—she had secretly married Lauzun. But he, apparently, had behaved so well under his great disappointment, that he lost none of his favour with the king. He had a fantastic mode of showing his desire of pleasing him; venturing on absurd actions, which often excited ridicule, and, strange to say, even envy, because royalty laughed and was amused at his conceits and originality. "*Courtisan également insolent,*

moqueur et bas jusqu'au valetage, et plein de recherches, d'industries, d'intrigues, de bassesses pour arriver à ses fins; avec cela dangereux aux ministres; à la cour redouté de tous, et plein de traits cruels et pleins de sel qui n'épargnaient personne."*

Lauzun's greatest enemies were the minister Louvois and Madame de Montespan. The latter was now installed in the household of the queen, having succeeded to the post held by the Countess de Soissons. M. de Montespan, having attempted to remove his wife from the palace, was arrested and sent to the Bastille. But as his detention there would have been an act too flagrant, even for the king to brave the scandal of, he was liberated, but ordered to leave Paris and reside on his estate. Considering his wife dead to him, M. de Montespan put on mourning, which appears to have given great offence to the king.†

Still further to increase the Grand Monarque's

* St. Simon.

† About thirty years ago a letter was found in the archives of the city of Perpignan, from the minister Louvois to the intendant Du Roussillon, desiring him to keep a vigilant eye on the Marquis de Montespan, and to lose no opportunity of annoying him and seeking his ruin.—See "Un Sermon sous Louis XIV." (page 3), par. L. F.: Bungener.

domestic vexations, La Vallière, unable to support the presence of so formidable a rival as De Montespan, whose increasing favour she could not fail to observe, in a moment of jealousy and despair fled to the convent of the Benedictines, at St. Cloud. No sooner was the king aware of her flight, and the place of her concealment, than he went in person to the convent and brought away his mistress. This proof of the attachment he still felt for her, if it was balm to her feelings, was gall and wormwood to her rival's. But while these two women contended for the first place in the king's favour, the queen, grieved and aggrieved, secluded herself in her oratory, and sought consolation in devotion. De Montespan had introduced her sisters to a share in the monarch's good graces, and, for the youngest and unmarried one, had obtained the post of Abbess of Fontevrault, which did not prevent her from passing the greater part of the year at court. She was witty and beautiful. The dress of an abbess was probably becoming, and her religious vows not repulsively severe. The episcopal benediction was given on the 8th of February following the disappointment of Mademoiselle; the ceremony was grand and imposing.

It was carnival-time. A masked ball was to take place at the Tuileries on Shrove Tuesday, the 18th of February. The king had ordered for the occasion a magnificent costume. La Montespan was also to shine there, and proposed to outshine her rival. But on the previous day the sensitive La Vallière again was missing, and it was ascertained that she had sought the protection of La Mère Angélique at the convent of Ste. Madeleine de Chaillot. The carnival had, on the whole, been a dreary one. Mademoiselle had not honoured the *fêtes* with her presence; the three queens had been indisposed for gaiety, and the king much annoyed by the various *contretemps* that dimmed the brilliancy of his balls and entertainments. The courtiers, who watched his countenance to regulate their own by it, had assumed a gravity more suitable to Lent, and the Mardi-Gras ball, that should have presented the gayest scene of all, brought the revelries of the court to an end in gloom. Montespan did not appear, and the king would not wear his new costume. He was anxious only for the return of Lauzun, who had been intrusted to bring back the fugitive.

And he brought her back, but disappointed and weeping that her royal lover did not, as

before, fetch her himself. She perceived in it a diminution of his affection, and an increase of her rival's influence. But Louis received her with tears of joy; Madame de Montespan with tears of—— "Guess," says Madame de Sévigné, "of what?" Well, probably tears of rage. For Madame de La Vallière no sooner reappeared, than she resumed the position for which De Montespan still was struggling, and which, equally with that of Grand Écuyer, or confessor, was a recognized one in the royal household—"*l'état de maîtresse en titre du roi.*" But, continues Sévigné, "*l'on a eu avec l'une et l'autre des conversations tendres. Tout cela est difficile à comprendre, il faut se taire.*" * Such was the complacency with which the profligacy of Louis XIV. was generally regarded; and it is evident, throughout the letters of Madame de Sévigné, that she sees nothing at all reprehensible in the immoralities of the king, so often referred to. "L'Amphitryon" of Molière, with its sparkling epigrams, was produced about this time, its

* An anecdote is told of a peasant, who one day meeting Madame de Montespan as she was walking in the grounds of Clagny, saluted her with most profound respect, and who, on her inquiring of him if he knew her, replied: "*Mais oui madame; c'est vous, n'est-ce pas, qui a eu la charge de Madame de La Vallière?*"

object being to deride the Marquis de Montespan, and excuse or approve the vice of Louis XIV. "*C'est le génie du temps,*" observed Arnaud, "*même chez ceux qui ont le plus de lumières.*"

CHAPTER XXII.

The King's Visit to Chantilly.—Reception at the Château.—A Stag-hunt by Moonlight.—Vatel's Distress.—Vatel's Suicide.—Confusion and Dismay.—Counting the Cost.

HE king, with a numerous retinue, is gone to visit Monsieur le Prince, le Grand Condé, at his charming retreat the Château de Chantilly. He passes under triumphal arches of verdure in endless succession, and at every village the peasants have turned out in gala costume to greet him. The gardens and grounds of Chantilly are illuminated with lanterns of various sizes and colours, producing what imaginative writers sometimes describe as "a fairy scene," amidst which, picturesquely-costumed, fair dames and cavaliers are leisurely strolling, awaiting the advent of their Grand Monarque—the *tout-ensemble* forming a magnified picture of an elfin-

glen, lighted up with glow-worms and fire-flies for the reception of Oberon and Titania.

For more than a mile from the entrance to the grounds, the road is lined on either side with men bearing torches; and soon the trampling of horses, the clanking of swords, the voices of the men, and a thick cloud of dust, announce the approach of the *avant-garde.* The king shortly follows. A signal is given, and a grand explosion of fireworks at the end of the avenue is the first greeting he receives. It is rather disconcerting to the horses, except to a few old warriors among them; they prick up their ears and neigh exultingly, and are ready to rush into battle. Le Grand Condé is there to receive le Grand Louis, who graciously invites him into his coach, and together they proceed to the château.

Grands seigneurs and *grandes dames* have come from all parts of France to this *fête*, and are ready to grovel in the dust before the king to obtain but a glance from his eye. Hundreds of retainers have been splendidly got up for the occasion. They are supernumeraries who have nothing to do but to fill up the stage, and look as if they were an important part of the spectacle. And the spectacle is grand. The

banqueting-room is grand; and the banquet is worthy of it, and of the guests who are to partake of the delicacies served under the superintendence of the great Vatel—"*homme d'une capacité distinguée de toutes les autres*," and the former *chef* and *maître d'hôtel* of the once celebrated Marquis de Belle Isle.

And it needs the *savoir faire* of a great man satisfactorily to provision the army the king has brought with him as a retinue, after providing for the tables of the grandees. For he is attended by the corps of gentlemen pensioners, one hundred in number, of whom Lauzun is captain (and the last who held that post). But all, so far, goes well; M. Vatel is satisfied. The king plays at piquet in the evening.

A *grande promenade à la mode de Versailles*; a collation beneath the spreading trees in the park, then beautiful with the verdure of spring; a stag-hunt by moonlight, and afterwards a supper, formed the programme for the following day. A brilliant display of fireworks was to have taken place when the moon went down; but for some reason, though attempted, it was not successful. Worse than all, as the result showed, the *rôti*—the *pièce de résistance*—was wanting at two tables that evening, and Vatel

was cut to the heart by it. Any incompleteness in the arrangements he regarded as a stain on his great reputation. For had not he, ten years before, presided over the vast preparations for those *fêtes* whose magnificence had roused the angry jealousy of the king? And shall it be said before the king, that Vatel, who then served that prince among men, the fascinating, the magnificent Marquis de Belle Isle, has fallen off, and is something less than his former self, now that he serves a prince of the blood? Forbid it, Heaven! Feverish anxiety had already driven sleep from Vatel's eyes for ten or twelve nights before this *contretemps* of the *rôti* occurred. The prince hears of his distress. He goes to his room to console him. "Vatel!" he says, "the king's supper was superb." "Monseigneur, the *rôti* was wanting at two tables." "Not at all," replies the prince; "nothing could be better; everything perfect."

Vatel seeks repose, but again at break of day he is up. He has ordered fresh fish from every possible part of the coast. Only he, however, seems to care whether it is brought in or not; for both guests and attendants, worn out with fatigue, are all fast asleep. Going out, he meets a fisher-boy bringing up two loads from the

coast. "Is that all?" exclaims Vatel. "All, sir," answers the boy, who knows nothing of the numerous orders elsewhere. Vatel is confounded. He cannot work a miracle, and give of these few fishes a portion to every guest. He subdues his emotion, and waits yet a little. In vain; no more fish is brought in. This second stroke of adverse fate, following so immediately upon the first, is more than he can bear. He meets Gourville,* tells him of his disgrace, and says "he cannot survive it." Gourville treats this as a jest, and laughs at it. But Vatel is terribly in earnest. He hastens to his room, and locks himself in. Meanwhile, several loads of fish are arriving, and Vatel is sought for to give orders respecting it. As knocking and calling are unheeded, the door of his chamber is forced open by the servants, and poor Vatel in a pool of blood, his sword passed through his body, lies dead before them! He had fixed his sword in the door and rushed upon

* Gourville was a man of some education, who having entered the service of La Rochefoucauld as *valet-de-chambre*, displayed so much ability and wit, that he admitted him to his confidence and friendship, and so far advanced his interests that, after being on terms of intimacy also with Monsieur le Prince, he was proposed as successor to Colbert in the ministry. He, like so many other of his contemporaries, left manuscript memoirs.

it; twice he was wounded but slightly, the third time it pierced his heart.

Great was the confusion and dismay this rash act of poor Vatel occasioned. Monsieur le Prince was in despair; Monsieur le Duc wept; and the king reproached M. le Prince. He said that for years he had deferred visiting Chantilly, because of the trouble, the inconvenience, and embarrassment he knew it would occasion; as the prince insisted on providing for the whole of his suite. He ought only to have had two tables, and there were upwards of twenty-five—he declared that he would never allow it again. Vatel's courage was praised by some, by others he was blamed. But the praise prevailed, because generally conceded that it was "*à force d'avoir de l'honneur à sa manière*" his suicide had been committed. Gourville, however, who seems to have been equal to any emergency, undertook to supply, for the occasion, the place of Vatel. The fish was cooked, the company dined, then promenaded, and took refreshments on the greensward, in a spot perfumed with sweet-smelling jonquils. Returning to the château they played at piquet, and considerable sums changed hands. Afterwards they supped, and, as the moon rose, they again set

off to chase the deer in the park and forests of Chantilly. No further *contretemps* occurred. The weather was bright, the chase exhilarating, and all was mirth and gaiety. Before night closed in poor Vatel was forgotten, and probably, but for the pen of Sévigné, his name and fame and tragi-comic end would never have been handed down to posterity.

The next morning the king and his courtiers and numerous retinue took their departure, and M. le Prince, with Gourville, then counted the cost of the *fêtes*. They had half ruined him, as many similar entertainments had nearly ruined others. For as it was "*le génie du temps*" to exalt the king's vices into virtues, so, it was *la manie du temps* to follow the course of reckless extravagance of which he set the example. And as he impoverished the State, they impoverished their families—too often leaving their heirs "*un très beau nom*," but not a *sou* in their coffers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Arrest of Lauzun.—From the Bastille to Pignerol.—An Uncongenial Couple.—Lauzun leaves France.—The King and the Dauphin.—The Dauphin's Preceptors.—Une Femme Savante.—The Duchess de Montausier.—"The King's Religion."—Madame Dacier's Translations.—A Famous Literary Dispute.—The Iliad of Lamothe.—A Youthful Critic.

AUZUN flattered himself that he still retained the favour of the king, who continued to treat him with a degree of familiarity which to Louvois, even more than to others, was exceedingly mortifying. However, one evening in November 1671, as he was about to visit Madame de Montespan—who, as he professed to be a connoisseur in gems, had asked him to examine some rubies and diamonds she proposed having reset—he was arrested at the door of her apartment by Maréchal Rochefort, who was there waiting his arrival, and conveyed him to the Bastille. He was not informed of what crime he was accused,

and was refused permission to write, either to the king or to Madame de Montespan. From the Bastille he was taken to Pignerol—where Fouquet had been languishing away life for the last seven years—and imprisoned in one of the lower dungeons of the fortress. It was thus the stern moralist, Louis XIV., punished the secret marriage of Lauzun with Mademoiselle.

After an imprisonment of long duration, at the solicitation of Madame de Montespan (to whose son, the Duc du Maine, Mademoiselle promised, as the reward of her intercession, the principality of Dombes and the Comté d'Eu, at her death) Lauzun was released and graciously permitted to thank the king. By the same eccentricities that had succeeded in former years he hoped to regain royal favour. Admitted to Louis' presence, he, with much effervescence—the bubbling over of his gratitude, probably, for his ten years' captivity—cast down his gloves and his sword at the king's feet, and stood speechless before him, as if with emotion. "*Le roi,*" says Madame de La Fayette, with delicate irony, "*fit semblant de s'en moquer.*" Lauzun was prohibited from appearing at court, but Mademoiselle, who vainly sought the king's

recognition of her marriage, was permitted to cede to him her estates of St. Fargeau and Thiers, and to allow him, besides, an annuity of considerable amount. Lauzun complained of it, as insufficient—for neither his pretensions nor his spendthrift habits had been at all moderated by captivity. Poor Mademoiselle expected to find an ardent lover in this husband for whom she had sacrificed so much. She forgot that she was fifty-four, and Lauzun some five or six years younger. She may have been a charming woman still, but happily, as most women of that age will think, all that can then be reasonably looked for of love, is, just the slightest dash of sentiment to vivify friendship between congenial souls.

But there was no congeniality between Mademoiselle and Lauzun. There had been weakness and folly on her side, ambition only on his; and now that he had nothing more to gain, he cared not even to treat her with outward respect. This heroine of the Fronde could not brook such conduct, and made no scruple of boxing his ears. He is said to have resented it by returning the compliment, and at last, after a violent quarrel, she haughtily commanded him to leave her presence and never appear before her again.

He obeyed, left France, and passed over to England. Mademoiselle found consolation in the society of *les gens de lettres*, and in writing her memoirs; she rarely visited the court. Hers was one of the few hôtels at which a literary circle then regularly assembled.

The court did not give much countenance to those literary coteries. At the suggestion of Colbert, Louis had, "*pour son propre gloire*," granted pensions to several poets and men of letters, who were growing old and were generally in poverty. The literature that found most favour with him, was that which took for its theme his transcendent glory, magnificence, magnanimity, heroism, and the rest of his superlative merits. And few were the poets of the time who did not—for flattery was the surest means of advancing their interests—in this way "fool him to the top of his bent." Lulli set many such charming stanzas to music; and the king had thus the double pleasure of hearing his praises sung by others, and—as was his habit—musically murmuring them forth himself. Owing to this excessive adulation in all who approached him, he lived in a sort of fool's paradise, the only one probably he succeeded in reaching.

Like Anne of Austria, he had no taste for reading. The post of reader to the king was a sinecure. "Of what use is reading?" he said to the Maréchal de Vivonne, who was a great reader, and whose interest in works, new and old, Louis could not comprehend. Le Maréchal was a tall, stout man, with a rather large face and florid complexion; "Sire," he replied, "reading does for the mind what you perceive good cheer has done for my cheeks." The dauphin inherited the same incapacity for giving sustained attention to reading or study. He acknowledged, in manhood, that he had never read anything but the births and marriages in the *Gazette de France*, from the time he was freed from the control of his pastors and masters. He was, therefore, as ignorant as the king himself; though he had had for his governor the conscientious and severely high-principled Duc de Montausier,

> "Qui pour le Pape ne dirait
> Une chose qu'il ne croirait;"

and for his preceptors, such men as Bossuet, who wrote for his instruction the famous "Histoire Universelle"—which gained him more renown as a writer and historian than he had acquired as a preacher; the eloquent Fléchier, bishop of

Nismes, who also composed a volume, "L'Histoire de Théodore," for his royal pupil; and the learned Pierre Huet, bishop of Avranches, who employed his able pen in his service on various subjects, which were treated in the form of essays.

Mademoiselle Lefebvre, afterwards the celebrated Madame Dacier, was requested by Bishop Huet, to prepare and comment the ancient Latin authors, for the use of the dauphin. But all this learning and care failed to make even an ordinarily well-informed man of him. Perhaps it was a course of study too dry, too severe, for one who had naturally but little intelligence, and but limited capacity for acquiring knowledge. The king did not like him; all his parental affection was reserved for his natural children, and the dauphin, who felt this, was constrained and ill at ease in his presence. He was overawed by the grand manners, and the habitual reserve and silence (in which he imitated him) of his royal father; who kept him in servile bondage—a child in leading-strings to the end of his days.

It is probable that neither the king nor Bossuet was aware, that the Latin authors prepared for the dauphin—useless though they

were to him—were commented by Madame Dacier, who was of a strict Protestant family. For, some few years after, having dedicated to the king her translation of "Aurelius Victor," with notes upon it, she could find no one who would venture to introduce her to enable her to present her book to him. This coming to the knowledge of the Duc de Montausier, he undertook to introduce her himself, and took her to court with him, for that purpose, in his own coach.

On the king being informed that Mademoiselle Lefebvre (it was just before her marriage) was in the ante-chamber, and of the object of her visit, he with an air of great resentment told the duke (himself a pervert for Julie's sake) that he had done exceedingly wrong in extending his protection to persons of that lady's heretical profession. He forbade the affixing of his name to any book written by a Huguenot, and gave orders that every copy of Mademoiselle Lefebvre's work should be seized.

The duke is said to have replied: "It is thus, then, that your Majesty favours polite literature. As a king ought not to be a bigot, I shall thank the lady, in your name, for the dedication of her book, and present her

with a hundred pistoles, which your Majesty may pay or not pay, just as you please." If he really did say this, he must have been a very bold man. His plainness of speech with the king was certainly notorious. But notwithstanding this, and his reputation for moral rectitude, and disdain of all the arts of a courtier, both he and Madame de Montausier — who before the appointment of the preceptor was governess to the dauphin—were accused of preventing M. de Montespan from having access to his wife, when, becoming aware of the king's designs, he would have removed her from the palace. Those who took a different view of their conduct, have said that the false accusation so preyed on the mind of the duchess that it hastened her death, which occurred only a few years after that of her mother, and when the *beau monde* of Paris was laughing at M. de Montespan as "L'Amphitryon." Fléchier, whose eloquent *oraisons funèbres* rivalled those of Bossuet, had been a *protégé* of the Duc de Montausier, and was chosen by him to deliver the oration on the death of the once celebrated fair Julie d'Angennes, the *belle* of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet. It was Fléchier's *début,* and

a successful one, in that branch of oratory.

But to return to Madame Dacier: *la femme savante, par excellence*, amongst French women of the 17th century. When, in 1685, the Edict of Nantes was revoked, and to escape persecution it was necessary to leave the country or abjure, she and her husband chose the latter alternative. Their sincerity was questioned; as, naturally, was that of many others who allowed themselves to be convinced against their will; and adopted a faith they had no faith in, in order to save themselves and their children from beggary, or from being hunted from place to place, like wild beasts, by the infamous myrmidons of the wretched bigot, Louis XIV.

Monsieur and Madame Dacier were both writers, she being a greater classical scholar than her husband; but it was a difficulty almost insuperable, and especially at the time of the Revocation, for writers of the Protestant faith to obtain recognition of their merits, however great they might be. But when they embraced "the king's religion" all went smoothly with them, and, like Pélisson, they were at once greatly considered in society; pensions were conferred on them, and had Madame

Dacier desired to dedicate another book to the king there would no longer have been any fear of its meeting with an ungracious rejection. M. Dacier was appointed *Garde des livres du Cabinet du Roi à Paris*, and madame's translations of the comedies of Plautus, Terence, and Aristophanes—their first appearance in French—were received with unbounded admiration.

She was the daughter of Tanneguy-Lefebvre, a man of great erudition, who, being accustomed to instruct his son daily in Latin and Greek, in the room where she sat at her embroidery-frame, was one day surprised to find, by her secretly prompting her brother when he was at fault in his lesson, that he had instructed his daughter also. From that time she shared her brother's studies, under her father's superintendence. At a very early age she published a translation of Florus; and soon after, another of Eutrope. Anacreon, Sappho, and Homer's Iliad and Odyssey were also translated by her. Bayle gave her a very high place in literature. "*Voilà*," he wrote, "*notre sexe hautement vaincu, par cette savante.*" Ménage dedicated to her his Latin work, "Les Femmes philosophes." Her contemporary, the distinguished critic,

Adrien Baillet, considered Madame Dacier's notes and comments on the ancient Greek and Latin authors most valuable; being both judicious and erudite. Voltaire also speaks of her as a prodigy of learning. "*Nulle femme,*" he says, "*n'a jamais rendu plus de services aux lettres. Ses traductions de Térence et d'Homère lui font un honneur immortel.*"

In the famous literary dispute on the respective merits of the ancient and modern authors, Madame Dacier declared for the former, and replied with considerable warmth to Lamothe, whose opinion was in favour of the moderns. She defended with ardour the gods that Homer had sung, regarding the criticisms of her opponent as little less than blasphemies. "Homer," said Lamothe, "calls Jupiter the father of the gods. Yet he is not the father of Saturn, of Cybele, of Juno, of the nymphs who tended him in infancy, or of Mars, Ceres, Vesta, or Flora. Neither is he the father of the giants, nor of men. Again, Homer relates that Jupiter drove discord out of heaven; how is it, then, that the gods are incessantly wrangling?"

Lamothe had given high praise to the works of Madame Dacier, and had addressed an ode to her on her translation of the Odes of

Anacreon. But she disregarded his compliments, and in her enthusiasm for Homer, characterized the remarks of the critic as "frigid, dull, ridiculous, and impertinent; displaying gross ignorance, overweening vanity, and a want of common sense." In conclusion, she related an anecdote of "Alcibiades, whose indignation was so roused on being told by an orator that he had not the works of Homer, that he rose and struck him. What would he be moved to do now," continued the learned lady in the heat of her excitement, "to an orator who ventured to read to him the Iliad of M. de Lamothe?"* To this Lamothe calmly replied, "it was fortunate for him that when he recited some part of his verses to Madame Dacier, this act of Alcibiades did not then occur to her." He, however, retracted none of the praise he had bestowed on her works, but spoke with admiration of her great talents, when he afterwards published "Réflexions sur la critique."

Monsieur and Madame Dacier had studied Greek and Latin together. He had been her

* Lamothe, who was not a Greek scholar, had put the Iliad into verse from a prose translation, and had added notes and reflections, which the learned Madame Dacier disapproved of as misleading and incorrect.

father's pupil, and the similarity of their tastes as students led to their falling in love. His admiration of the Greek and Latin poets was as enthusiastic as hers; but though his works were valued by the learned for their research, they were not so generally esteemed as the translations of Madame Dacier. She died in 1720, at the age of sixty-eight. Her husband was of the same age; nevertheless, he was desirous of taking a second wife, and proposed to Mademoiselle de Launay (Madame de Staal), who thought him rather too old. He died in 1722.

They had two daughters, one of whom took the veil, and a son, who died at the age of eleven. This boy gave promise of becoming as distinguished a Greek and Latin scholar as his mother. It was supposed also that a few more years would have developed his possession of great critical powers, as, at the age of nine, he had pronounced, as his own opinion, that "*Hérodote était un grand enchanteur, et Polybe un homme de grand sens.*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Camp at Chalons.—Going to the Wars.—"Vive Henri IV." Death of Charles Paris.—Lamentation and Woe.—"Les Solitaires" of Port-Royal.—The King Returns to France.—The Dutch Reject Peace.

THE King had visited the grand camp at Chalons, and reviewed the troops assembled there—an imposing military spectacle, at which the three queens had assisted. A hundred thousand men were under arms, and war was declared against the Dutch. The nobles were borrowing; mortgaging, or selling their estates; or by some other expedient attempting to raise money, to provide the extravagant equipment necessary for appearing with *éclat*, more important than valour, at this war. The king and his staff were to fare sumptuously every day, and court etiquette was to be strictly observed.

All ruffles and ribands, perfumes and wig,

the royal warrior steals off from St. Germain on an earlier day than he had appointed; in order to avoid the tearful *adieux* of La Vallière and the queen. Montespan, less loving, therefore more lively and amusing, awaits him at Nanteuil, with the rest of the paraphernalia of war. The new gold and silver embroideries of the courtiers forming his numerous staff, shine with a brilliancy that rivals the sun at noonday. These courtiers surround his carriage—for Louis no longer rides to the scene of action. His Guards, also a dazzling host, follow; and his retinue of attendants, scarcely less bedizened, brings up the rear.

How different this formal pageant, with which the great Louis went forth to look at a battle, from the dashing and devil-may-care manner of Henry IV.'s setting out, in his best days, to fight one. He encumbered himself with no long curly wigs, no satins and laces, silk stockings or red-heeled shoes. But arrayed in a grey woollen suit—usually something the worse for wear—booted and spurred in military fashion, and with a dingy white plume in his grey felt hat, he, without more ado, vaulted into his saddle. Gallantly he waved his *adieux* to "the girl he left behind him"—his "Charmante

Gabrielle"—and rode jauntily forth at the head of his troops, who enlivened their march with many a song. And as often as not, you might have heard the gay ditty—

"Vive Henri quatre,
Vive ce roi vaillant,
Ce diable à quatre
Qui a le double talent,
De boire et de battre
Et d'être vert-galant."

If there was nothing remarkably estimable in this, it was, at least, more manly than the ostentatious show of his selfish and degenerate grandson.

The details of the raid on Holland are of course not to be looked for in these pages. It may, however, be mentioned that several of the younger nobility of France lost their lives during the passage of the Rhine—attempted after the French had laid waste many a fair province, and had been guilty of revolting crimes in the towns surrendered to them. The Dutch were unprepared for war, and were always less formidable on land than on the sea.

Amongst the slain was the young Duc de Longueville—Charles Paris, born at the Hôtel de Ville during the Fronde. He, in fact, was

the cause of the carnage that ensued. The Rhine, where it was shallow, was partly forded, and partly traversed in boats. The townspeople fled; the few troops encountered on landing demanded quarter; but Longueville, rash, inexperienced, and heated with wine, cried out, "*Point de quartier pour cette canaille,*" and, at the same time, fired on their officer, and killed him. The men, who had been ready to lay down their arms, roused by this act, took courage, and fired on Longueville and his companions. The young duke fell dead, also the Chevalier de Marsillac, the brother of La Rochefoucauld. The Prince de Marsillac, the son of the latter, was wounded; also the Comte de Guiche, the son of Maréchal de Grammont. Monsieur le Prince was mounting his horse at the time; a Dutch officer, observing this, rushed forward and aimed at him with a pistol; the prince struck it down, the man missed his aim, and the prince broke his wrist—the only hurt he ever received, throughout the whole of his campaigns.

The skirmish was short and sanguinary. The Dutch, while it lasted, dealt many a telling blow. But soon, none were left to continue the fight. Martinet then threw a bridge of boats

(his invention) across the river, and Louis walked over it as a conquering hero.

But great was the lamentation in Paris. When the news of her son's death was communicated to Madame de Longueville, she fainted away, exclaiming, "Ah! my dear son! my dear son!" Convulsions followed, interrupted by stifled cries, sobs, and appeals to heaven. So great was her agony, that those who witnessed it "were tempted to wish that death would mercifully end her sufferings." "And there is a man," writes Sévigné, "whose grief is scarcely less than hers. I fancy, if they had met, and met alone in the first moments of their anguish, all other feelings would have given place to this grief; and they would have lamented and wept together over their common calamity." That man was La Rochefoucauld. He was inconsolable, it appears; though he strove to dissemble his sorrow for the fate of his unacknowledged natural son.

Madame de Longueville's second son had ceded his title and other rights to his brother, but on his death claimed them again. The duchess supported his claims, and he was legally reinstated in the position he had renounced. After this event, she built herself a suite of rooms

within the precincts of Port-Royal les Champs; following the example of her friend, Madame de Sablé, who had won her over to Jansenism, and had given many fair penitents to Port-Royal de Paris. Madame de Longueville had long before withdrawn from the court; but now —though without taking the veil—her retirement became stricter, her penance more severe. Sometimes, at the convent of the Carmelites, sometimes, in the damp, dreary retreat of Port-Royal les Champs, she would, for weeks together, sleep on the bare ground, wear sackcloth and horsehair, and an iron band round her waist. In the intervals, "les solitaires," as they were termed, of Port-Royal—Arnauld, Le Maître, Saci, Nicole, and several others, men of great reputation for learning, eloquence, and personal merit—assembled in her apartments to read; or to discourse on subjects, having reference to Jansenism. The ardent temperament of the Duchess de Longueville led her to enter with great warmth into the disputes which so long disquieted the Pope, the King, and the Jesuits, on the vexed question of Jansenism. Many of the most distinguished of the literati inclined to its doctrines, which appear to have been a modification of those of Calvin. They were, therefore,

obnoxious to the king, who was resolved to extirpate them, though he really knew nothing of Jansenism, except, that, being stigmatized as heterodoxy, it was not his religion.

But at this particular juncture it is martial ardour that fires his breast. Having crossed the Rhine, and his troops having installed themselves in several forsaken towns (the Dutch in the beginning of the war had an idea of flooding the country, and emigrating to Batavia), he thinks it well to return to France. Turenne and his generals are left to take possession of Amsterdam, while he receives the tribute due to his heroism, in the acclamations of his people, laurel wreaths, and the complimentary verses of the court poets; such as:

"Nous verrons toute la terre
Assujettie à ses lois;
Pour l'amour ou pour la guerre,
Dès qu'il daigne faire une choix,
Un Dieu lui prête son tonnerre
Un autre Dieu son carquois."

Triumphal arches, columns and statues were ordered to be erected to commemorate the king's series of conquests in Holland. But before they were completed the conquests had to be abandoned. The Dutch had opened the sluices and inundated the country; they had made Prince

William of Orange, then in his twenty-second year, their stadt-holder; they had refused the peace offered by France; and in Amsterdam, as in a fortress amidst rolling waters, they hold out against the French troops—under famine and all the miseries of war.

But Ruyter has scattered the English and French fleets, and brings relief to his country by sea. Charles, too, has been forced to withdraw from his alliance with France, and Europe is arming against the Grand Monarque; who, instead of shouting "Victoria!" is compelled to abate his pretensions.

CHAPTER XXV.

Louis XIV. and La Vallière.—The Favourite and the Queen.—Mdme. Scarron at Vaugirard.—La Vallière's Third Flight. Pious Austerities.—An Audacious Priest.—Bourdaloue.—A Courtly Preacher.—A Lenten Sermon.—The King's Condescension.—Père La Chaise.—The Peripatetics of Versailles.—La Bruyère.—Pélisson's Conversion.

T is difficult to understand why the commonplace *amours* of Louis XIV. and La Vallière should have been so idealized that she, above all his mistresses, is usually exalted as a saint. For ten years she lived very contentedly in the royal palaces, without any uncomfortable awakening of conscience, or thought for the queen. Maria Theresa wanted spirit and animation, but she had much affection for her unworthy husband. And doubtless she had far greater reason, as well as greater right, to feel both grieved and insulted by his flagrant infidelities, than had La Vallière when supplanted in her post of first mistress.

She did, indeed, endeavour, for a time, to follow the example the queen so long set her, of uncomplainingly tolerating the presence of a favoured rival placed above her. But not having the same power of resignation to circumstances, she sought to recover her influence by an abrupt departure from the court. And it was a triumph very gratifying to a jealous woman's feelings when Louis, in person, brought her away from the convent.

Her want of sincerity, in the step she had taken, was evident from her disappointment, when next year she had recourse to the same expedient. "Alas!" she exclaimed, on seeing only Lauzun, "the king came in person to remove me from the Benedictines; now he deputes another to take me back to him." But for three years after this she remained at the court; tearful and sorrowful, a mere foil to the lively, witty, and sarcastic De Montespan; who then reigned supreme over her royal lover, and was treated *en reine*—receiving far more attention and homage than the timid, retiring Maria Theresa.

Often, when the courtiers were assembled in the great gallery of Versailles, promenading and conversing, while the ladies of the court, sitting in groups, were chatting familiarly together,

suddenly, every voice would be hushed, the ladies rise from their seats, the men bow low, and with downcast eyes stand immovable. The haughty Marquise de Montespan appears, and, followed by twenty or more ladies, with stately step, slowly traverses the gallery. Presently, another lady leaves the royal apartments; three or four others following. If the company in the gallery should chance to be seated, they rise and salute her, as, with an air of gentleness and modesty, she passes them; but they assume no cringing attitudes, and scarcely for a moment interrupt their conversation. "It is only the queen."

Clagny and Trianon are built, and Madame Scarron, who prospers as the influence of the reigning favourite increases, now resides in a remote part of the Faubourg St. Germain, near the village of Vaugirard, then quite in the country. She is nurse to the "royal children," and inhabits a large, handsome house, of which few have the privilege of the *entrée*. The apartments are spacious and elegant, and the house has fine gardens. Madame Scarron has her carriage, several horses, and a suitable staff of servants. She dresses magnificently, but in perfect taste; as one accustomed to live in

the society of people of distinction. She has charmingly easy manners, is considered amiable and pleasing, and her conversation lively and agreeable. Madame Scarron is well *en train*, by-and-by to avenge Madame de La Vallière. And possibly some such vision may have already begun, mentally, to open before her.

La Vallière's third flight is a final one—such men as Louis XIV. are not subdued by tears and the air of a victim. All hope of regaining her position being at an end, she begins, after fourteen years of blindness, to see that she has wronged the queen. She confesses herself guilty, and asks pardon before the court. The poor little queen—a neglected wife—is affected by the sorrows of the forsaken mistress. Bossuet fortifies the penitent in her resolution, and she enters on her noviciate in the Carmelite convent of the Rue St. Jacques. L'Abbé de Fromentière, a distinguished preacher, delivers a discourse on the occasion; the text, "I have found my sheep which was lost," etc. The following year, on making her profession, Bossuet is the orator. The queen is present, the court, and the *beau monde* of Paris. Bossuet is not "*aussi divin qu'on l'espérait*," Sévigné informs us. No word is uttered having reference to the past life of

the penitent, or to the cause of her retreat from the world. "*Un jésuite adoucit tout*," says le Père André. To allude to it would be to cast some reflection on the king, tarnishing the brightness of his glory, wounding his nice sense of honour.

Madame de La Vallière lived thirty-five years in the Carmelite convent, making atonement for her errors by the usual superstitious practices then, perhaps still, in vogue — practices that remind one of the customs of savage tribes for propitiating the evil spirit when anything goes amiss with them. Scratching and wounding her flesh, sleeping on the damp ground, walking barefoot, and, it is said, abstaining for a whole year from drinking water or any kind of liquid—which seems impossible—were some of the pious austerities by which the saintly Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde worked out her salvation. The death of her son, at the age of sixteen, seems not to have affected her; and she took no interest in her daughter, afterwards, Princess de Conti, who often visited her, and desired to show the poor recluse the respect and affection due to a mother.

A short time before Madame de La Vallière took the veil, an effort was made to dethrone

De Montespan also. Her confessor having refused her absolution, she complained to the king; who was overwhelmed with astonishment and indignation at the audacity of the "obscure priest," and sought the opinion of Bossuet on the subject. The great orator *ventured*—for the most zealous ministers of God feared far more to offend their earthly sovereign than their heavenly one—to approve the refusal of the "obscure priest," and to point out to the king the sinfulness of his conduct in setting an example that gave occasion for such scandal. He even urged him to prohibit Madame de Montespan from again appearing at court; but Louis was not then prepared for so decisive a step—Madame Scarron was not yet the pious Madame de Maintenon.

Bourdaloue preached the Lenten sermons that year at Versailles. Bossuet, except in funeral orations, or on special occasions similar to that of La Vallière's profession as a nun, was no longer heard in the pulpit. His fame as a writer had eclipsed his fame as a preacher, and Bourdaloue, Mascaron, and Flechier now held the first rank as pulpit orators. The greatest, perhaps, was Bourdaloue—his style, grand and powerful, lending force to those arguments by

which he sought to convince the understanding and to speak to the conscience. He disdained to appeal to the feelings, or to excite the temporary emotion that so often draws tears from an audience; so that he was rarely touching, rarely persuasive, but always convincing. Sévigné relates that, when he was once preaching to a profoundly silent but crowded and fashionable congregation at Notre Dame, the old Maréchal de Grammont—whose attention had become entirely absorbed by Bourdaloue's arguments—forgetting that he was in church, suddenly exclaimed, with great emphasis, as he struck his cane on the floor, "*Mordieu! il a raison.*" This startling interruption disconcerted the preacher, and created so much confusion amongst the congregation—of whom as many were disposed to laugh as to be annoyed—that the remaining part of the sermon was but imperfectly attended to.

It was, however, the custom even with Bourdaloue too often to follow the stream; and if he did not actually flatter the king in his sermons, to leave him a side-door open through which to escape from the crowd of miserable sinners—being consoled when he came to his peroration to find that he was not obliged to include that

demigod amongst them. But on the particular Good Friday before alluded to, Bourdaloue was to strive to "catch the conscience of the king." The king had once, on the conclusion of a sermon, said to a preacher who had been so bold as to depict a sinner in which he was compelled to recognize his own portrait: "*Mon père, je veux bien prendre mon part dans un sermon, mais je n'aime pas qu'on me le fasse.*" Of course he never again allowed him the opportunity. He disliked, too, to hear that death was no respecter of persons; that the king of terrors stayed not his hand either for dignities or wealth. "*Nous mourrons tous—tous,*" said a preacher one day—preaching before Louis XIV. A movement of the king, sudden and involuntary, reminded him that he had touched on a theme displeasing to royalty. In his dismay and confusion he humbly qualified the force of the assertion by an apologetic "*Oui, sire—presque tous.*"

'Tis true that Bourdaloue—whose genial temper and high personal merits caused him to be as much courted and sought after in the society of the wealthy and great as he was generally admired for his eloquence in the pulpit—could venture to utter bolder truths in the

presence of the king than those poor preachers, who—if the anecdotes be true—must have been either inexperienced or obscure. "*L'Evêque de Meaux* (Bossuet) *et le Père Bourdaloue*," says La Bruyère, "*me rappelent Démosthène et Ciceron.*" And Bourdaloue appears in this Good Friday discourse to have struck terror into the hearts of the brilliant throng that crowded the chapel of Versailles (the men in the picturesque full dress of the period; the ladies also magnificently attired, but, as was customary on church festivals, in colours more subdued). But their terror is for the preacher. They watch the king's countenance; it gives no sign of inward perturbation. Yet it may be the last time that the voice of the great Bourdaloue will be heard in that gilded temple! Who can tell? The preacher himself is astonished at his own daring. Though Louis is pleased to hear others castigated, rarely indeed does the great king apply what he hears to himself. The barrier the preacher is accustomed to set up between him and the rest of the world is, however, wanting on this occasion—but the sermon is ended.

It is usual with the king to pass from his chapel through a small adjoining apartment,

where he remains for a few minutes, when satisfied with the sermon, to compliment the preacher. Thither Bourdaloue is summoned. The crowd of servile courtiers dare not raise their eyes until the king has given the signal for approval or displeasure. Contrary to all expectation, it is approval. "I thank you for your sermon, mon père," he says to Bourdaloue. The priest, who is a man of commanding presence, bows in acknowledgment of his Majesty's condescension. "You have done your duty," continues the king. "I am not displeased; it was an excellent and eloquent discourse."

It did not, however, induce him, as was especially the object of both Bossuet and Bourdaloue, to refrain, until he had banished Madame de Montespan from the court, from confessing and receiving absolution himself. It should of course have been denied equally to him as to his mistress.* His Jesuit con-

* At Pentecost both went comfortably through their devotions without let or hindrance from scrupulous confessor or preacher. Madame de Sévigné, who records this fact, and who may be said to represent the moral side of the society of that period, adds: "*Sa vie* (De Montespan's) *est exemplaire; elle s'occupe de ses ouvriers* (at Clagny); *elle va à St. Cloud où elle joue à Hoca*"—a game of hazard at which many of the courtiers ruined themselves to please the king. At St. Cloud presided Madame, second wife of the Duc d'Orleans, and daughter of

fessor, the Père La Chaise (whose vast garden at Menilmontant, now the famous cemetery, was presented to him by the king, planted with choice flowers, which he was fond of cultivating), really had some scruples of conscience concerning it; conciliatory though he was, and a lover of ease, and in his mode of life more of a *bon vivant* than a priest. After the penitential period of Lent—when the king made a very clean breast of it—the holy father was accustomed to feign illness, to lie in bed and undergo a slight bleeding; the royal penitent sending many times daily to inquire after the state of his health. But he was always too much weakened by the severity of the attack to attend him, when this alarmingly heavy burden of sins had to be removed. A Jesuit priest, in whom he placed great confidence, was therefore deputed to perform the onerous duty for him, and was of course only too glad to have the opportunity of absolving the Grand Monarque.

the Prince Palatine. She was as ugly as she was *spirituelle et maligne*. She said, when she had to abjure Lutheranism on her marriage with Monsieur, that "on her arrival in Paris three bishops were appointed to confer with her on the subject of religion, and to instruct her in her new faith; but as she found that they differed widely from each other in points of belief, she took from each the quintessence of his creed, and formed them into a religion for herself."

The Père La Chaise has been aptly described as "*un singulier mélange de ruse et de bonté, de circonspection et de franchise.*" Of his office of confessor to the king he himself said: "*Bon Dieu! quel rôle!*"

Bossuet, as preceptor to the dauphin, had his apartment in the palace. He and the learned ecclesiastics of his intimate society were familiarly designated by the court "*Les philosophes.*" For he had introduced the custom of selecting some special subject for conversation and discussion in the daily walks he and his friends were accustomed to take in a retired avenue in the grounds of Versailles. Learned abbés, preachers, and bishops, as their several inclinations or special studies led them, named a theme—historical, theological, metaphysical, etc.—upon which each expressed his opinion or ideas. These philosophical promenades continued for many years at Versailles and elsewhere, and formed for some time an exclusive literary society. Afterwards, men of letters, who were not ecclesiastics, were permitted to join it; but as its discussions retained, more or less, a serious tone, and were often of a purely religious character, when the king became devout much eagerness was

evinced, by zealous courtiers, to be numbered amongst the philosophers.

Racine was a member, also La Bruyère, who, at Bossuet's suggestion, had been selected to reside, in quality of *homme de lettres,* with Monsieur le Duc—the grandson of the great Condé—to instruct him in history. La Bruyère was a philosopher of a very genial school; a man of great suavity of temper, fond of society, of which he was a keen observer, and distinguished for wit and polished manners. "Les Caractères," one of the *chef-d'œuvres* of the seventeenth century, obtained for its author the honour of an academical *fauteuil.* It has been said, that it would have obtained for many men of that time a sojourn in the Bastille; so vivid are the portraits, so keenly incisive is the satire; but, that, like Boileau, La Bruyère did not attack the king. He held the post of *gentilhomme de la chambre du roi,* and the king had a great esteem for him. "Télémaque" and "Les Caractères," the two most original works of that period, have been those the most frequently imitated and with the least success.

Pélisson was also of the philosophers, though little esteemed by them. His talents were undoubted, and his defence of Fouquet had

secured him general admiration. But his abjuration of Protestantism, like that of Turenne, was by both Catholics and Huguenots regarded as insincere. "*Dieu lui avait fait la grande grace,*" as Fénélon said, "to open his eyes at the precise moment when it was most to his worldly interest to be converted." No more active agent was employed against the Protestants than the Calvinist Pélisson, and none reaped more solid rewards for zealous persecution of them than he. Gold and lucrative sinecures were showered upon him, under whose genial influence grew brilliant flowers of rhetoric, which he employed for the ornamentation of peans in honour of the king. Even by the servile herd of courtiers, Pélisson's flattery was regarded as mean and base. And, in a discourse delivered at the French Academy, Louis himself was embarrassed by it. One may, therefore, safely conclude that the force of adulatory eloquence could no further go. The only voice then unfalteringly raised in praise of Pélisson was that of his old friend Madeleine de Scudéry. She, like a true woman, could both lament the downfall of poor imprisoned Fouquet, and rejoice at the elevation of his renegade friend; of whose sincerity in changing his faith nothing could shake her conviction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Death of Turenne and Retirement of Condé.—Funeral Orations.—La Belle Fontanges.—Marriage of the Dauphin.—La Dame d'Honneur.—Poetry and Piety.—La Fontaine.—The Soldier-Prince.—Death of La Belle Duchesse.—The Tuileries Forsaken.—Poisonings and Magic.—Marriage of Mdme. de Maintenon.

HORTLY after the death of Maréchal Turenne—who was shot through the heart while choosing, with General St. Hilaire, the position for a battery near the village of Saltzbach, the same ball carrying away the general's right arm—the great Condé retired from active service. He suffered much from gout, was also a little jealous of younger military men, and particularly impatient of the interference of Louvois and the king—the latter nominal commander-in-chief of the armies. The balls, masquerades, and entertainments of the Tuileries, Fontainebleau, and Versailles, had possessed but little attraction for

him even in the days of his impetuous youth. Now, he very rarely visited the court, preferring the retirement of his charming Château of Chantilly and the society and conversation of men of genius and learning, of scientific pursuits, or celebrity in the arts. He had always been an encourager and patron of literature, and was himself an intelligent amateur in some branches of science.

Turenne, like most of the distinguished men who took part in the great events of the century, left MS. Memoirs, which, as Voltaire observes, are not in the style of those of Xenophon and Cæsar; but the great soldier's chequered career, his conversion, and tragic death, supplied a fine subject for the display of Bossuet's great oratorical powers; and his treatment of it was grand and dramatic. Flechier's oration on the same occasion was also considered a *chef-d'œuvre* of its kind. France had lost her two greatest generals; still the war went on. Another campaign, however, was followed by the peace of Nimègue. While peace was being signed, William of Orange, Louis' inveterate foe, gained a victory at Mons over the Maréchal Duc de Luxembourg, and Louvois and Louis continued to

ravage the German States. Strasbourg was surprised and taken; the consternation and despair of the inhabitants at falling under the despotic rule of France, being as great as, when, two hundred years after, torn from France, they fell under the despotism of Germany. The Hôtel de Ville of Paris conferred on the king, at this time, the surname of "*Le Grand*," and struck several medals commemorative of the event.

But while his generals were carrying fire and sword through the small German towns and inflicting cruelties on their helpless inhabitants, Louis was gradually becoming pious. The star of De Montespan was rapidly declining, that of De Maintenon steadily rising. The children and their *gouvernante* now lived in the palace, and De Montespan soon began to detect a rival in her perfidious *protégée* and friend. Quarrels ensued between them; the king interfered, and endeavoured to appease the jealousy of one, and to soothe the wounded feelings of the other. Notwithstanding, "*on parlait de changement d'amour*," "*La belle Fontanges*" had begun her short reign, and was already Madame la Duchesse, with a pension of twenty thousand *écus*. She had received

in bed, as was the custom, the congratulations of the court. The king himself had publicly complimented her on the further honour conferred on her sister, whom he had made Abbess of Chelles. De Montespan, though greatly enraged at the "*prospérité*," as Sévigné calls it, of la belle Fontanges, was cut to the heart at the far more dangerous ascendency which the cleverer and more wily, though less young and beautiful, rival, was acquiring over the mind of the king.

Madame de Maintenon was soon after named *dame d'honneur* to the Princess of Bavaria, an alarmingly ugly but *spirituelle* young lady, just married (1680) to the dauphin, who was then nineteen. M. de Sanguin, one of the gentlemen of the court appointed to escort the princess to France, wrote to the king, by way of warning of the shock he might otherwise receive: "*Sire, sauvez le premier coup d'œil.*" The dauphine, conscious of her extreme plainness, and of the want of those airs and graces which alone found favour in the profligate court of Louis XIV., led a life of great retirement. The dauphin, however, was much attached to her. She was so good and so clever; and had so much pleasing expression that, after the first

shock, her want of beauty was forgotten. The king, too, took some pleasure in her society, and spent in her apartments the hours he had been accustomed to pass with the haughty marquise. As *la dame d'honneur* was also there, it led to "*une infinité de conversations agréables*," in which he daily discovered a greater charm, as well as new attractions, in the lady he had once thought but slightingly of. Maria Theresa, who had also a liking for her daughter-in-law, complained that Madame de Maintenon kept them apart. This was a new cause of grief, but she yielded to the queen; and she had her reward: "*l'homme le plus aimable de son royaume*" chatted with her in her own apartment. He cared not to put any constraint on the gossip of the poor little queen, who never appeared before him without involuntarily trembling. In the course of these interesting *tête-à-tête* conferences the king was first made to doubt of the safety of his soul; and for hours together he listened attentively to his fair preacher.

Roederer considers that the death of Molière, in 1673, contributed to bring about the change in the mind and character of the king, in the period between 1675 and 1680, and to confirm

the ascendency which the example of those persons who preserved the moral traditions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had begun to acquire. "During Molière's career," he says, "*les lettres* had sanctioned and protected the licentiousness of the court against the *société d'élite;* but as the manners of the court underwent a change, the poets perceived that the time had arrived to adopt another tone. The gross expressions so favoured, so cherished, by Molière, are not to be found in the works of his successors of the *Théâtre français.* Neither in Regnard, nor even in the plays of Dancourt. Not a trace of them in La Bruyère, who, more diversified than Molière, wrote in every tone, and depicted a greater variety of characters." The muse of Racine, so tender; so passionately loving; became pious. He and Duché began to vie with each other in composing plays on Biblical subjects. Corneille, whose last tragedy, "Suréna," was produced in 1680, translated, the next year, "L'Imitation de Jésus Christ." Bensérade translated hymns for the "*livre d'heures*" of the king. Quinault wrote:

"Je n'ai que trop chanter les jeux et les amours,
Sur un ton plus sublime il faut me faire entendre;
Je vous dis adieu, Muse tendre,
Et vous dis adieu pour toujours."

After this we have no more flowing lyrics from the pen of Quinault. Instead of from love, with its pains and its pleasures, he sought inspiration from the vile deeds of *Les Dragons;* and chanted "*les dragonnades*" under the title of "L'Hérésie détruite." Only La Fontaine continued to address his licentious verses to certain *grandes dames* and *grands seigneurs* of the "*Société Italienne.*" But the time was approaching, when he, also, had to impose some restraint on the freedom of his muse; though La Fontaine sought for no favours from the court, and was content to linger on in poverty, after his patroness, Madame de la Sablière—in whose house he had lived twenty, years—tired of the world, or the world tired of her, went into a convent to make an edifying end to a life of "*belle galanterie,*" as it was termed. "All's well that ends well," was the general motto of those "*belles dames galantes.*" It was Madame de la Sablière who said to her *protégé,* "*Mon bon ami La Fontaine, que vous seriez bête si vous n'aviez pas tant d'esprit.*" For though so full of gaiety and sprightliness in his writings, he was dreary beyond endurance in conversation, and inclined to be moody and melancholy.

Having married the dauphin, the king began

to establish the rest of his family, and Mademoiselle de Blois, La Vallière's daughter, at the age of fourteen, became, by royal command—for the bridegroom was an unwilling one, and the Grand Condé exceedingly mortified—the wife of the Prince de Conti. The soldier-prince, compelled to appear at the marriage of his nephew, being appealed to *à l'improviste*, was induced to have his venerable beard shaven off. Beards were not then fashionable at court; but the habits of Condé, as regarded toilette and fashion, were not unlike those of Henry IV.; when he put off his sword he made himself comfortable, in a plain and easy-fitting suit; and he cherished his beard, but would not condescend to a wig. His valet, taking advantage of his having undergone, in honour of the marriage, the operation of shaving, proceeded to dress, to pomade, and to powder his hair, of which he seems to have had an abundant crop. The womankind of his establishment prepared for him a new close coat of rich brown satin, with large diamond buttons, which, with a diamond-hilted sword, completed his wedding suit. His *coiffure au naturel* excited the envy of the court. The long wigs, reaching half-way to the

knees, looked ridiculous, we learn, by the side of Condé's "*belle tête.*"

But the Grand Condé was then but a wreck of his former self; the fiery spirit of his youth had burnt out, and at fifty-nine he was already an aged man. His only sister, the celebrated Duchess de Longueville, died in the preceding year. Her beauty, and her extreme piety—for she, too, had injured her health and hastened her death, by those wretched practices supposed to be gratifying to the Deity, and to atone for sin—being made the subject of great laudation in the funeral panegyric. The prince had been greatly affected at her death. How many painful remembrances it awakened, as well of his own brilliant youth as of hers! La Rochefoucauld also was dead; a very short interval occurring between his death and that of the duchess. Madame de La Fayette was inconsolable, and secluded herself from society. Between her and La Rochefoucauld had long subsisted one of those sentimental attachments, or friendships, which not unfrequently occur in France in the latter part of life between persons of opposite sexes, but an instance of which is of rare occurrence in England. There is something of the *romanesque* in the idea, which

to most English minds would, in middle age, be the equivalent of ridiculous. "Old friends and old wine," says an illustrious English sage, "as many of the first and as much of the latter as you please, but no old women." It follows, then, that old friendships in England can exist only amongst old men. Poor old women! why not all emigrate to France for the chance of the solace of an old friend of the sterner sex?

When death sundered the bonds of friendship between La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La Fayette, two literary *salons* were closed; and when the same ruthless destroyer, in 1683, made Louis XIV. a disconsolate widower, he put an end also to the court of the Tuileries. From that time, the king held his court permanently at Versailles, with occasional excursions to Fontainebleau and Marly. The Hôtels de Nevers, de Bouillon, de Soissons, and one or two others of the dissolute Italian school of morals, still flourished. But Bourdaloue having denounced "*les mœurs Italiennes*" in a Christmas-day sermon preached before the king, several young courtiers who frequented those *salons* were banished to their estates for a time. This, together with the absurd charges made against Mesdames de Soissons, de Bouillon, and de

Tingry, and even against the Maréchal Duc de Luxembourg, of being implicated with the infamous Voisin and her companions, who were burnt on the Place de la Grève, in dealings with the devil; by means of incantations, enchantments, poisonings, and the arts of magic generally—showing how much of ignorance and barbarism yet lurked under the social varnish of politeness and refinement of speech—brought discredit on the Italian *réunions*, and closed more than one of those *salons*.

Madame de Fontanges and the queen being dead; de Montespan banished from the court; and the dauphine in ill-health, passing all her time in her apartment, the office of comforter to the king in his affliction devolved solely on Madame de Maintenon. Her anxiety to save his soul increased, as her opportunities increased to bring about that good work. "*Peut-être*," she wrote, "*il n'est pas si éloigné de penser à son salut que sa cour le croit. Il a des retours fréquents vers Dieu. Il serait bien triste que Dieu n'éclairât pas une âme faite pour lui.*"

And Heaven did kindly enlighten this erring soul; made him zealous also to save the souls of others; and, as a first step in the thorny path of piety, some time between 1685 and

1686, he married Madame de Maintenon, in the dead of the night, in the chapel of Versailles. Though the date is variously given, yet that the marriage (in proof of which no state document or writing of any kind is known to exist) took place, has never been doubted.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.—Petitot, the Enamel Painter.—His Escape to Geneva.—Bordier.—Vandyke.—Petitot and Bordier in Paris.—Portrait of Jean Sobieski.—Destruction of Works of Art.—Petitot's Chef-d'Œuvre.

HORTLY before, or after, that most inauspicious event, the marriage of Louis XIV. with Madame de Maintenon, took place, the king determined on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It proved a national calamity—many of the misfortunes that weighed so heavily on France in the latter part of the king's reign having resulted from that highly-impolitic step.

At that time the celebrated enamel painter, the Chevalier Jean Petitot, lived in the Rue de l'Université, in a handsome residence facing the Hôtel Tambonneau. There, for many years, he had received the visits of the court, and of the

most distinguished people in Europe, all eager to possess one of his precious gems of art. He was then seventy-eight years of age, but still worked unremittingly, and without any diminution of skill, or of finish in his productions. In all of them he took the highest interest; executing them *con amore*. Doubtless, to this intense love of his art the general excellence of his work is to be attributed, and, that none, that with certainty could be assigned to him, has ever been found unworthy of his great reputation.

But Petitot was no less zealous as a Huguenot than as an artist; and on the Revocation of the Edict being announced he requested permission from the king, with whom he stood very high in favour, to retire to Geneva, his native place. The old man's request was refused, and that he might not secretly leave the country, a *lettre de cachet* consigned him and his wife to Fort l'Evêque. As soon as the Swiss Government heard of this arbitrary act, every effort was made to obtain Petitot's release; but in vain. Confinement and anxiety soon told upon his health, and the result was fever. Louis, who had frequent occasion for Petitot's services, fearing the old painter might die, ordered his removal

to a house. This was, in fact, but exchanging one prison for another—the house being inclosed within walls, beyond which he was not permitted to pass. It has been asserted that Bossuet was charged to visit the old man and his wife; in order to reason with them, to point out the errors of their faith, and to bring them into the fold of the faithful, but that his success was by no means satisfactory.

Like many others, however, Petitot was induced, for the purpose of obtaining his release, to sign a confession of faith. As soon as he was set at liberty, he and his wife escaped to Geneva, where, before the Conseil de Genève, they made a declaration that they had but yielded to the force of circumstances, and that Petitot had returned to his country to seek consolation there, and to obtain pardon from Heaven. These declarations, or letters, to the Conseil are still extant. They are said to be expressive of great anguish of mind, and to convey some idea of the misery then generally experienced by the Protestants of Paris.

Petitot's father was a skilful sculptor in wood. He apprenticed his son to a jeweller of Geneva, and Jean soon displayed so much ability in ornamental enamelling that he was advised to

keep solely to that branch of his business. After some years of patient study, he and his friend Bordier—a fellow-workman of similar tastes and much skill—went to England, where some enamelled jewellery they had been commissioned to execute for the court so pleased the king that he mentioned it to Vandyke. The great painter desired to see it, and was much struck by its beauty and excellence. Several miniatures of the royal family, after portraits by Vandyke, were then executed by Petitot—the heads and hands being his work, the draperies and background Bordier's.

Théodore de Mayerne, a Swiss Protestant, was at that time the king's physician. He was an able experimental chemist, and had discovered some opaque colours for enamels which Petitot had long been anxious to obtain. By the aid of them he was enabled to bring his art to much greater perfection, by improving the flesh tints, and graduating the shadows of his paintings. After a time Charles I. knighted him, and gave him and Bordier an apartment at Whitehall. When the royal family fled to France Petitot accompanied them. His fame had preceded him, and numerous were the commissions he received for portraits of Louis XIV.,

as well as for private persons, and for the court. The charge for these exquisite miniatures was at first twenty louis; but so great was the demand for them that it was increased very soon to forty. However, the louis d'or was then not worth more than ten francs.

There was no rivalry whatever between Petitot and Bordier. They worked together for fifty years without ever having had a disagreement. Their partnership was founded on mutual attachment, and the love they both had for their art; though to Petitot was assigned the pre-eminence in it. In 1651, three years after their arrival in Paris, they divided equally the profits of their joint labour, which amounted to a million francs. Each then thought he was rich enough to take to himself a wife. Petitot married Marguérite Cuper; Bordier, her sister Madeleine. On the restoration of Charles II. he would have taken the painter with him to England, and promoted him to great honour—for Charles, in the straits he was often reduced to when in exile, had on several occasions been glad to avail himself of Petitot's hospitality. But being established in Paris he preferred to remain there, and Louis then conferred a pension upon him, and gave him and his partner an *atelier* in the gal-

leries of the Louvre. There he continued to work for some years; but, on the death of Bordier, advancing age and increasing wealth made it more convenient to him to establish an *atelier* in his own mansion.

Petitot had resided thirty-six years in Paris when the oppression and cruelty that resulted from the bigotry of Louis XIV. in revoking the Edict of Nantes, drove him, and so many thousands of its best citizens, from France. Petitot retired to Vevay, but continued to work. One of his most admired productions was executed there, after he had passed his eighty-second year —the portraits of the famous Jean Sobieski, King of Poland, and his queen. She is seated on a trophy, holding in her hand the portrait of her husband. The oil-paintings from which the faces were copied were sent to Switzerland to him, and the price paid for this double work was a hundred louis d'or. The old painter was engaged on a portrait of his wife, when, in 1691, he was suddenly taken ill. He died the same day, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He had had a family of seventeen sons and daughters. One only of the former became a painter. He established himself in London, and afterwards in Dublin. At the time of the

Revocation, the survivors of Petitot's large family who were settled in France, signed the confession of faith, and remained there. When their father fled to Geneva they presented a petition to the king, praying that he would pardon him; to which Louis replied, that "he could forgive an old man's wish to be buried with his fathers." He was, however, aware that Petitot would have been well content to live on in peace with his family in France, and also to have been buried there.

Many of the great artist's priceless productions are said to have been destroyed for the sake of the comparatively valueless gold plaques, upon which the greater part of them were painted. This, in some instances, was owing to the ignorance and cupidity of the persons into whose hands they sometimes fell; in others, to the times of dire distress in France, when every piece of the precious metals, however small, was collected and carried to the mint; and objects of art of inestimable value were sacrificed to the needs of the state.

Amongst so many exquisitely beautiful specimens of Petitot's skill, it would be difficult perhaps to select one to which could be assigned the honour, *par excellence*, of being his *chef-*

d'œuvre. Yet it has been considered, that no known work of Petitot has surpassed in beauty and finish his portrait, after Vandyke, of the Countess of Southampton. It belongs to the Duke of Devonshire; its date is 1642.

Petitot was for many years a member of the French Academy of Painting, to which he presented, on his election, a fine enamel portrait of Louis XIV., after that, in oil, by Le Brun. But on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—as soon as it was known that Petitot was unwilling to abjure the Protestant faith—his name was erased, by royal command, from the list of Academicians.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Marriage of Mdlle. de Nantes.—Death of the Grand Condé.—Bossuet's Last Oration.—Madame de Caylus.—Lines Addressed to Her.—The Marquis de la Fare.

IT was also in 1685 that the king conferred on the Condé family the further mortifying honour of marrying his second illegitimate daughter, Mademoiselle de Nantes, a girl of twelve years, to Monsieur le Duc, grandson of the great Condé. Louis never really forgave the prince his conduct at the time of the Fronde, but delighted to find opportunities of vexing and humiliating him. This marriage, so repugnant to the family, was celebrated with extraordinary splendour. *Carrousel* at Versailles; fancy *fête* at Marly; the ladies drawing lots for a variety of magnificent jewels, until all were provided with a valuable

present from the king. A brilliant *fête* was given in the fine gardens of the Château de Sceaux, and Madame de Montespan was permitted to share in the festivities in honour of her daughter's marriage. It was a sort of triumphal closing of her career, in the presence of her successful rival—for it was her last appearance at court. She retired with an immense income, increased by a pension of a thousand louis d'or per month—for her services, probably, to the state. She, however, did not seclude herself in a convent, but was content to wear secretly a sackcloth chemise; with necklace, bracelets, and garters, *en suite*, of rough horsehair, garnished with little sharp points of steel.

In the following year the Grand Condé died, at Fontainebleau; whither he had hastened, alarmed for the safety of his grandson and heir, on hearing that the young duchess had taken the small-pox — the Prince de Conti, a few months before, having died of the same disease. The youthful bride and bridegroom recovered; but Condé's strength was unequal to sustaining the shock he had received, and the fatigue of a hasty journey, which was great in those days; and in a very short time after his arrival, this

great prince, and hero, ended his chequered career.* Both Bossuet and Bourdaloue delivered funeral orations. That of Bossuet was his last. He was sixty years of age, and to give full effect to this kind of eloquence physical power was needed, with appropriate action, and the voice thoroughly under command. Perhaps he felt some slight falling off in them, his admirers saw none; he, however, chose to retire from the pulpit with his reputation, as one of its greatest orators, undimmed; and he is said on this occasion to have surpassed himself.

The king had an illness in 1686 which partly obliged him to renounce balls, plays, and *fêtes*, and thus gave him a greater inclination for the practices of piety. The court being less brilliant, its disorderly pleasures were to come to an end, and give place to hypocritical devotion. "*La mode passe, et le courtisan est dévot,*" says La Bruyère. "It is but a change of vice. If the king were an atheist, the courtier, too, would be an atheist."

* It was pretended that a man in full armour, resembling him, had been seen by a gentleman of the household but a few days before, standing at a window of the armoury. This place, always kept locked, was searched; no one was found. A servant confirmed his master's story, and it was told to the prince, who smiled incredulously, yet was really affected by it. Belief in such tales was in accordance with the superstitious spirit of the age.

If the Huguenots had been but as supple as the courtiers, how they would have gladdened the heart of their saintly king.

Madame de Maintenon was already beginning to feel the weight of those chains she had forged for herself, and to seek some relief from the monotony of her life. "Consideration," when attained, pressed heavily upon her. Imitating the king; she, too, would build, and St. Cyr was the result of *ennui.* Anxious also to save the souls of poor little heretics, she began with that of her niece, Mademoiselle de Murçay, who was converted by a promise of being taken every day to see the grand show of high mass in the king's chapel. At the age of fifteen she married her to the dissipated old Marquis de Caylus. It was while walking with this niece in the gardens of Versailles, some years after she became the wife of Louis XIV., that Madame de Maintenon, replying to Madame de Caylus' remark that the carp brought to the ponds of Versailles soon languished and died, said, with a deep sigh, "*Elles sont comme moi; elles regrettent leur bourbe!*"—and well, indeed, she might regret it; for the last thirty years of her life were but as one long penance.

Madame de Caylus was a very lively and

rather wild young matron—her frequent *escapades* greatly ruffling the serenity of the staid Madame de Maintenon. She was exceedingly pretty—one of the few *belles* whose portraits seem to justify their reputation for beauty, piquancy, and *esprit*. The old Marquis de la Fare—the same who was the lover of Madame de la Sablière, and whose devotion to *bassette* she regarded as so unpardonable an infidelity, that chiefly on account of it she gave up the world in disgust—addressed the following lines to Madame de Caylus.

"M'abandonnant un jour à la tristesse,
Sans espérance, et même sans désirs,
Je regrettais les sensibles plaisirs
Dont la douceur enchanta ma jeunesse.
Sont-ils perdus, disais-je, sans retour ?
Et n'est-il pas cruel, Amour !
Toi que j'ai fait, dès mon enfance,
Le maître de mes plus beaux jours,
D'en laisser terminer le cours
A l'ennuyeuse indifférence ?
Alors j'apperçus dans les airs
L'enfant maître de l'univers,
Qui, plein d'une joie inhumaine,
Me dit, en souriant : Tircis, ne te plains plus,
Je vais mettre fin à ta peine ;
Je te promets un regard de Caylus."

La Fare was distinguished above the crowd of minor poets of his day, and these verses

have been ranked amongst the prettiest of his productions. They were written after Madame de la Sablière had renounced her faithless swain.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Reappearance of Lauzun.—James II.—Melancholy Mirth.—Distress in France.—Decline of Les Belles Lettres.—Madame de Lambert.—Death of Mdlle. de Scudéry.—Ninon de Lenclos.—Voltaire.—Death of Ninon.—1715.

N 1689 Lauzun reappeared in France; accompanying Maria Modena, James II.'s queen, in her flight with the infant prince, from England. James himself soon followed. Louis XIV. was royally munificent in his hospitality to his cousin James and his queen. It added another to the already heavy burdens of France. But what of that, if it added, or was supposed to add, to the glory of the king. Except with the king, James found little favour at the French court. And bigot though he was, pope, cardinals, bishops, and even the Jesuit priests whom he so courted, alike ridiculed and contemned him.

"The courtiers," says Madame de La Fayette, "the more they saw of King James, the less they pitied him for the loss of his kingdom." Their unfavourable opinion had, however, no better foundation than his inability to give in pure French a flowing narration of his troubles; and the want of *distinction* in his manners; the undue length of his sword, which he carried ungracefully, trailing it after him, and the size of his hat, that covered not only his head but his eyes. They forgot that the poor man, in his haste to get safe away with his head, might have left his own hat behind him, and have snatched up any other that fell in his way. He had a large appetite, too, and "ate as heartily, it appears, as if no William of Orange existed." On the whole, it may be surmised that James made but a poor figure in comparison with the courtly and magnificent Louis.

A little more gaiety was introduced into the then severely limited routine of court pleasures. The only plays tolerated being the "*petites pièces pieuses*" of Duché and Racine, performed by the demoiselles de St. Cyr. "Esther," otherwise, Madame de Maintenon, was played for the amusement of James and Maria. There

was the chase in the morning, billiards in the evening; also, *un petit opéra* at Trianon, performed by the court; and at Marly a little gambling, at the new game of "*portiques.*" It was carnival-time, but the masked balls were spiritless, and for other reasons than court piety. They began only at midnight, and before two the melancholy maskers had dispersed. Led on by Louvois, who died suddenly in 1691, the king had brought the nation to the brink of ruin, and murmuring and misery were general.

Louis was particularly anxious that James should see and admire his fine gardens and waterworks of Marly and Versailles, which had cost thirty thousand men their lives, and still were unfinished. The numerous gardeners employed in keeping up the grounds, had famine, visible, in their hollow eyes and wasted features. There was not a *sou* in the state's coffers to pay them, and provisions were scarce, for the lands lay untilled for want of labourers.

Lauzun accompanied James on his expedition to Ireland. On their return, at the request of James, Louis received Lauzun again into favour, and gave him the title of duke. James created this vainglorious swaggerer a Knight of the

Garter, and presented him with the insignia of the order that had belonged to Charles I. Lauzun was once more lodged at Versailles with the court. Mademoiselle protested vehemently against it; but the miseries of the country were too absorbing to allow of attention being given to her complaints. Mademoiselle died in 1693, and Lauzun duly mourned for her in black, relieved with blue and white—silver and gold being prohibited on account of the national distress. A few years after, he married Mademoiselle de Lorges, a younger sister of the young Duchess de Saint Simon. Being a second time left a widower, he retired to the convent of Les petits Augustins, in Paris, and died in the odour of sanctity at the patriarchal age of ninety-one.

In 1695 the magistrates of Paris were excused by the king from presenting him with their accustomed New Year's offerings. The *fêtes* of the *jour du roi* were suppressed, and the plays and masquerades of the carnival. The misery of France seemed complete as the century drew towards its close. Famine, pestilence, and war had exhausted the resources of the country. Louis had neither money nor men. The people were dying of hunger, and

refused to serve a king whose highest aim was to gratify his own ambition.

Of the last fifteen years of the reign of Louis XIV., the page of history tells a sorrowful tale. It was a period unfavourable also to *les belles lettres*, and to the progress of science and art. Celebrated women and men, distinguished for learning, genius, and eloquence, gradually died off, but left no successors. "*La nature semblait se réposer*," says Voltaire. Lulli and his *collaborateur* Quinault died within a year of each other—1687 and 1688. Le Grand Corneille, Racine, Molière, La Bruyère, Duché, Pélisson, and La Fontaine were dead. Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Mascaron died in the same year—1701. Mademoiselle, Mesdames de La Fayette, de Sablé, Des Houlières, and de Sévigné all within three years—1693 to 1696. And many other distinguished men and women who shed lustre on the reign of Louis XIV. disappeared from the stage of life at about the same time.

The traditions of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet, "*le berceau de la société polie*," yet survived at the hôtel of the Marquise de Lambert—that splendid hôtel in the Ile St. Louis, designed by the architect Levau, deco-

rated and painted by Lesueur and Le Brun, and which has been in modern times restored by Prince Czartoriski. Madame de Lambert, whose mother, the Marquise de Courcelles, married as her second husband, the famous *bel-esprit*, Bachaumont — who christened the Fronde — not only received a distinguished circle of the *literati* and the *beau monde*, but was herself a writer. She published a collection of "Portraits;" "Une traité sur l'amitié;" a romance, "La femme hermite;" and "Avis d'une mère à son fils, et d'une mère à sa fille:" the last being her most esteemed work. The Duchess du Maine, who, ugly and deformed, received complimentary verses on her great beauty when she was between sixty and seventy years of age, was not celebrated as the patroness of those *beaux esprits* Lamothe, St. Aulaire, Fontenelle, Chaulieu, and others, until after the death of her husband in 1736.

But in 1700 Mademoiselle de Scudéry still lived. She was ninety-three, and had given up her "Saturdays" only five years before. The friends of her early days had of course passed away, but she had lived so long that their successors had become old friends, and a large circle still constantly visited her—the French

being far less neglectful of the ties of relationship and friendship than are the English. She continued to write up to the age of eighty-five, and is said to have regretted that so much of her early life had been spent in writing romances. She became deaf and feeble, but her mind remained perfectly clear and vigorous. Her friends compared her to a sibyl to whom the power of eloquent speech alone remained. On the morning of the 2nd of June, 1701, she rose early, as was still her custom. Soon after she was seized with a sudden weakness, and said to her servant: "*Bettine, je sens qu'il faut mourir.*" Her confessor and her medical attendant were sent for, but she had breathed her last before they arrived.

Two churches claimed the right to bury her —that of the "Hôpital des enfants rouges," where she had expressed a wish to be buried, and that of "St. Nicolas-des-champs," the parish in which she had resided for fifty years. Cardinal de Noailles decided in favour of the latter, and there, on the evening of the 3rd of June, 1701, she was interred. No monument to her memory, no epitaph, or inscription now exists in that church. She died in straitened circumstances, her brother having spent nearly

all the large profits derived from her novels, and the pensions conferred on her being rarely paid.

Another celebrity of the seventeenth century still survived—Mademoiselle Ninon de Lenclos—charming, it is said, to the last. In 1700 she was eighty-four, and still held her weekly *réunions* in the same house in the Rue des Tournelles. The *beau monde* of both sexes, men of letters, and men of science and those who aspired to be thought *beaux esprits*—though *esprit* had gone out of fashion, because, as with many other good things in those times of general scarcity, there was a dearth of it—assembled at five o'clock in a well-warmed apartment she called her *salle d'hiver*. On its walls hung portraits of her friends, painted by the first artists of the day. The company retired at nine, for though not in ill health, she was delicate and fragile; unable to bear the fatigue of much conversation, and needed quiet and repose. In summer she used the Psyche *salon*, which was sunny, and had a pleasant view of the boulevards, and her hours were a little later. Jean de la Chapelle, then of her society, wrote:

"Il ne faut pas qu'on s'étonne,
Si souvent elle raisonne,
De la sublime vertu,
Dont Platon fut revêtu.

Car, à bien compter son age,
Elle peut avoir vécut
Avec ce grand personnage."

Madame de Maintenon is said never to have lost her interest in this friend of her less prosperous, but happier, days, and to have been desirous of affording the king the pleasure of seeing and conversing with the aged enchantress. She desired, too, that she should become less of a philosopher and more of a devotee. But her overtures were not met by Ninon as she had hoped they would be. Mademoiselle de Lenclos was not disposed to visit Versailles even to amuse the great Louis. She thanked her friend for her kind intentions, but made her comprehend that for her it was too late to begin to learn "*l'art de dissimuler et de se contraindre.*"

In the last year of her life some verses that Arouet (Voltaire), then a mere child, had written on her ninetieth birthday—October 17, 1706 — were shown to her by the Abbé Chateauneuf. Ninon desired to see the youthful poet, and her friend took him to visit her. His conversation, and intelligent replies to the questions she put to him, pleased her greatly, and she advised him to be diligent in acquiring

learning, also, to continue to write poetry. A few weeks afterwards she died; very calmly and from sheer exhaustion of nature. Unable to sleep, on the last night of her life, she is said to have composed the following lines, which were taken down by the friends who attended her death-bed.

> "Q'un vain espoir ne vienne point s'offrir
> Qui puisse ébranler mon courage,
> Je suis en age de mourir,
> Que ferais je ici davantage?"

In her will she left young Arouet a thousand livres, to purchase books for his studies.

Of literary women, of any distinction, there remained at the close of the century only Madame Dacier, Madame de Lambert, and Madame de Maintenon—whose letters, in a literary point of view, far surpass those of Madame de Sévigné; she also wrote a work for the use of St. Cyr. Of distinguished men, Fénélon, Flechier, and Boileau were then living, but died before the king. Massillon, Fleury, Lamothe, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, and Fontenelle—who reached the age of one hundred—with many others of lesser note of the seventeenth century, survived far into the eighteenth.

In 1715 the long reign of Louis XIV. ended. "An end very different from its beginning. He received his kingdom powerful and preponderating abroad, tranquil and contented at home; he left it weakened, humiliated, discontented, impoverished, and already filled with the seeds of the Revolution."*

* Roederer—"Mémoires pour servir," etc.

CHAPTER XXX.

Close of the Reign of Louis XIV.—Paris in 1715.—Hôtels of the Noblesse.—Coach-building.—Misery and Famine.—Italian Opera Prohibited.—Grand Altar of Notre Dame.—Faubourg St. Germain, 1690.—Death of the Grand Monarque.

ARIS at the close of the reign of Louis XIV., though for upwards of thirty years the court had forsaken it as a residence, and the Louvre and the Tuileries were greatly in need of repair, was a much finer city than when, in 1661, the king took the reins of government in hand. Its streets were still ill-paved and ill-lighted; but for more than a hundred years after the same might be said of them. A stream of black mud ran down their centre, and, when any vehicle passed, foot passengers had to beat a hasty retreat through any open doorway they could find, if they would avoid a mud shower-bath or

escape being crushed against the walls of the houses; for foot-pavements there were none, and the streets generally were so narrow that there was not space to allow of them. But Paris now extended far beyond its ancient limits, and since the destruction of the old ramparts and bastions, the faubourgs had become united by new buildings to the city. A new boulevard had been planted on either side of the river, and another from the Porte St. Antoine to the Porte St. Honoré; so, notwithstanding that the streets in the centre of the city were miserably dirty there were fine open walks around it. That part lying between the Rue Montmartre and the Cité de Notre Dame had been partially cleared of its network of dilapidated old tenements, and new streets with fine hôtels had taken its place. In every new street opened during the reign of Louis XIV., there was placed, in some part of it, a bust of the monarch in a full court wig.

Monsieur had enlarged the Palais Royal. The Rue Colbert, crossing the Rues Vivienne and De Richelieu, was finished. "Le Sieur de Lulli"—who became a rich man before he died, and "drew a large revenue from his operas and a vast concourse of people to his music"—had

a very fine hôtel in the Rue Vivienne.* The Hôtel de Louvois was remarkable for its "marvellously wrought" locks, which were kept so bright that they had the appearance of silver; and several other of the hôtels of the *noblesse* had exceedingly curious locks. The Rue du Grand Chantier was full of handsome houses. Many of them were built by Mansard, and contained fine specimens of his work, in the elaborate carvings of the broad and lofty grand staircases.

Splendidly furnished, too, were most of these princely dwellings. But the silver and gold—in many instances priceless works of art, which once abounded in them—had been carried to the mint, when, to supply funds for Louis' wars, private individuals were stripped of their valuables. Still, rich tapestries adorned the walls, and the hangings of the massive state beds were of the richest satins, heavily embroidered—marvellous specimens of needlework, as well as of patience and skill. But with all this display, this taste and grandeur, little regard was given to cleanliness in these vast hôtels, or even in the royal palaces; and of comfort there may

* Lulli's tomb and bronze bust are in the church of Notre Dame des Victoires.

be said to have been none. Crowds of lackeys and pages infested them, but for ornament rather than use; their chief duty being to display the rich liveries of the *grand seigneur* or *grande dame* to whose household they were attached.

Coach-building made considerable progress in the reign of Louis XIV. The royal carriages were splendid.* Those of the nobility and the *beau monde*, generally, though rather too large, were not only elegant, but comfortable and well slung, and all were furnished with glass windows and sun-blinds. As many as eight hundred carriages might be seen on the fashionable drive of the Cours de la Reine on a fine day in the Paris season.

The Pont Royal, the Royal Observatory, designed by Perrault, and the Hôtel des Invalides, were, as before mentioned, built by Louis XIV. The Place des Victoires was constructed in 1685 by that most servile of courtiers, the Maréchal de Feuillade, who gave 80,000 livres

* In the superb collection of ancient royal carriages belonging to the King of Portugal, in Lisbon, there is a magnificent carriage presented by Louis XIV. to Don Juan V., on his marriage. It is finely carved; the panels were painted by Jouvenot. On one of them is a portrait of Louis, said to be an excellent likeness.

for the ground—the site of the Hôtel de la Ferte Senneterre and its gardens—in order to place there the statue of the king. The *Place* was lighted at each corner by four lanterns, surmounting a triangular column. On the pedestals were fulsome inscriptions in honour of Louis XIV.

In 1691 several old houses were cleared away. The building of the Rue de la Monnaie was continued, and the Rue du Roule was opened. But famine and poverty prevented many desirable changes from being carried out, and caused many intended embellishments in different parts of the city to be given up. Paris was full of indigent people, who had sought refuge there from the misery and distress of the provinces. Those who could labour were employed in the king's works; those who were either unable or unwilling to do so, if they begged, were sent to Bicêtre, and when released, menaced with the galleys if they repeated the offence. There was occasionally a distribution of bread to these starving creatures. But so severe, and so stringently executed were the regulations respecting them, that the greater part fled from the evils that beset them, and perished by hundreds from hunger and disease.

In 1697, the king becoming more and more devout, the Italian comedians were driven from Paris. They had possession of the Théâtre de Bourgogne, and hitherto had been favoured with the royal patronage. But now it was withdrawn, and they were ordered to give up the theatre to the lieutenant of the police, who put seals on the doors. The *troupe* dispersed, and appeared no more in Paris until 1716, when the Regent Orleans again allowed them the use of the Théâtre de Bourgogne.

The Place Louis le Grand—now Place Vendôme—was begun in 1699. The old Hôtel de Vendôme stood there, and blocked up and disfigured the entrance to Paris on the side of the Rue St. Honoré, preventing also any communication with the Rue Neuve St. Honoré and the Rue des-Petits-Champs. The king found money to buy this hôtel and the neighbouring convent of Les Capucines. The convent was rebuilt; the new *Place* was planned; the surrounding buildings being intended to receive the "Bibliothèque du roi." But when partly erected the king disapproved of the plan. It was a perfect square; he preferred that its corners should be cut off. The whole was therefore taken down, and the materials offered to the

municipality of Paris to build a barracks for the second company of Mousquetaires; if the city would undertake to re-erect the *Place.* The offer was accepted, and the Place Vendôme built in its present form. An equestrian statue of Louis XIV. was placed in the centre, but the surrounding houses were not entirely completed until after the king's death. This *Place* was one of the great improvements of the city.

In the same year the king resolved to accomplish his father's vow, made in February, 1638, to rebuild the grand altar of the cathedral of Notre Dame, in commemoration of the placing of his kingdom under the special protection of the Virgin. It was finished only the year before the king's death, the work having been for some time suspended because of the national misfortunes and reverses. This grand monument was destroyed in 1793, and "*sur les pompeux débris de l'antique imposture*" was erected a symbolical mountain, on which was elevated the statue of the GODDESS OF REASON! In 1803 the present altar was reconstructed.

In 1703 the city and its faubourgs were divided into twenty "quartiers." The wall inclosing the university was taken down, and the moat filled up. The four gates that separated

the Faubourg St. Germain from the rest of Paris were removed, and the Quartier St. Germain, as the faubourg was thenceforth called, was no longer a distinct portion of the city. It was, however, the pleasantest and healthiest part of it. Its hôtels, some of the finest in Paris, were surrounded by extensive gardens and pleasure grounds. An old "Englished Guide to Paris," date 1690, says: "This faubourg may be compared with some great towns in Europe which are much talked of, according to the opinion of strangers themselves, to whom the dwellings here appear so pleasing that they prefer this part of town to all the rest of Paris. And they have great reason for so doing, since all things abound here."

The only theatre where French plays were performed was in the Rue de Seine. But the *troupe* seems to have been an inferior one; neither the tragedies of Corneille and Racine, nor the comedies of Molière were given, but pieces of little merit by obscure writers of the day. The king had set his face against the poor players, and the theatre was therefore but little patronized by the *beau monde*.

In 1715 the population of Paris, including the faubourgs, amounted to four hundred and eighty

thousand souls. The city was improved, no doubt, but there was not the same life and activity in it as in the good old times before the Fronde. The spirit of independence was nearly crushed out of the people; they were submissive and resigned under the heavy calamities which the king's extravagance and vain ambition had brought on them. A little feverish agitation was sometimes apparent, but the fear of the Bastille and the Place de la Grève soon quelled it.

The news of the king's death was received almost with indifference by the populace. Perhaps it excited some slight emotion in the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*. But, on the whole, the feeling of the people was one of subdued joy; and throughout society there was a sensation of relief when it became generally known that THE GRAND MONARQUE WAS DEAD.

THE END.

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